Notes Concerning Eternity
(a supplement to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis)

By J. Martin Strangeweather

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Essential Thanatological Reading List
(Thirteen Crucial Works on Death and Dying)

1. *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, or *Spells of Coming Forth by Day*, circa 1550 BCE

2. The *Bardo Thodol*, or *Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State*, commonly known in the West as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, revealed by Karma Lingpa sometime in the 14th century

3. *The Meaning of Death*, Herman Feifel, 1959

4. *On Death and Dying*, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, 1969

5. *The Denial of Death*, Ernest Becker, 1973

6. *Life After Life*, Raymond Moody, 1975

7. *The Hour of Our Death: The Classic History of Western Attitudes Toward Death Over the Last One Thousand Years*, Phillipe Ariès, 1977

8. *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life*, Robert Jay Lifton, 1979

9. *Dying to Live: Near-Death Experiences*, Susan Blackmore, 1993

10. *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death*, Margaret Lock, 2001

11. *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, Mary Roach, 2003

12. *Walking Each Other Home: Conversations on Loving and Dying*, Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush, 2018

13. *The Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis: A Reinterpretation of Death and Dying* and the related *Notes Concerning Eternity*, J. Martin Strangeweather, 2024

You can find a free copy of *The Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis* on the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation's website: **https://www.nderf.org/NDERF/death_dying.pdf**

eidos (noun)

/ī-däs/

1. The cognitive content and intellectual character of a culture or social group.

2. The outward appearance of a deity. *(according to Homer)*

3. Truth made manifest. *(according to Parmenides)*

4. A timeless and unchanging idea or nonphysical essence. *(according to Plato)*

5. The mere image or shape of a thing, its species. *(according to Aristotle)*

6. The invariable and essential nature of an object. *(according to Edmund Husserl)*

7. A powerful psychoactive elixir composed of endorphins, adrenaline, noradrenaline, glutamate, acetylcholine, serotonin, dopamine, and endogenous DMT. Eidos is formed and released during the final stage of the dying process, similar to how semen is formed and released during the apex of sexual pleasure. *(according to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis)*

eidetic (adjective)

/ī-de-tik/

1. Pertaining to or denoting mental images having unusual vividness and detail, as if actually visible.

2. Pertaining to or denoting an illusion or hallucination so realistic it fools the senses and intellect.

3. Pertaining to or denoting a mode of interpretation in which matter and mind are understood to be ultimately indistinguishable. *(according to George Berkeley)*

A Brief History of Thanatological Terminology and Acronyms

1. In 1896, Victor Egger coined the term *experience of imminent death* (EID) to describe the "life review" that climbers said they experienced during falls from great heights.

2. In 1943, G.N.M. Tyrell coined the term *out-of-body experience* (OBE) to describe the experience of one's consciousness being separate from one's body.

3. In 1975, Raymond Moody coined the term *near-death experience* (NDE) to describe the various phenomena commonly associated with dying, such as life reviews, time dilation, and encountering the deceased.

4. In 1994, Yvonne Kason coined the term *spiritually transformative experience* (STE) to describe a variety of profound spiritual events which change one's viewpoint and character forevermore.

5. In 1996, Bill Guggenheim and Judy Guggenheim coined the term *after-death communication* (ADC) to describe the experience of having spontaneous contact with the deceased, as opposed to mediumship.

6. In 2011, Raymond Moody coined the term *shared death experience* (SDE) to describe the phenomenon of psychically experiencing the NDE of someone else as they are dying.

7. In 2022, Sam Parnia coined the term *recalled experience of death* (RED) to describe the experience of consciousness and recall during verified instances of clinical death.

8. In 2025, J. Martin Strangeweather coined the term *augmented consciousness experience* (ACE) to describe the common mechanics underlying all drastically altered states of consciousness.

Defining Death

At this stage in our exploration of the dying brain process, I should take a moment to explain the legal, clinical, and biological definitions of death. First off, brain death is not the same as the death of the rest of your body. According to a report published in 2020 by the World Brain Death Project, there are eight criteria for determining brain death:

1. All indications of awareness are absent.

2. Pupils are fixed in a midsize dilation and unreactive to light.

3. Corneal, oculocephalic, and oculovestibular reflexes are absent.

4. No facial movement when subjected to noxious stimuli.

5. Gag reflex is absent.

6. Cough reflex is absent.

7. Pain reflex is absent.

8. Breathing reflex is absent.

The World Brain Death Project has since added that the absence of detectable electrical activity in the brain for over 30 minutes is also an indication of brain death, but they warn that electroencephalographs cannot be relied upon to confirm this with absolute certainty.

The aforementioned list is only for establishing brain death. Even if other organs are still functioning, irreversible cessation of brain activity is classified as being legally dead, as opposed to being clinically dead or biologically dead. Clinical death is defined as the shutdown of the cardiopulmonary system. If treated in a timely manner with the use of CPR or other resuscitation methods, clinical death is reversable. To be considered biologically dead (i.e., completely and irreversibly non-functional), the total absence of heartbeat, respiration, and electrical activity in the brain must be evident beyond any possibility of resuscitation.

It should be noted that in most cases the exact moment of death is unknowable due to the multitudinous gradual changes taking place during the dying process. Different types of cells die at different rates. Recent evidence suggests brain cells die slowly over a period of many hours, sometimes even days, after a person's heart stops beating. If this is indeed the case, should it change the way we deal with the recently deceased?

https://med.nyu.edu/research/parnia-lab/cardiac-arrest-death

Notes Concerning Eternity, part one:
A Brief History of Thanatology

[1] *Spells of Coming Forth by Day*, otherwise known as *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (circa 1550 B.C.E.) introduced the notion of an interim state of consciousness that is neither alive nor dead.

[2] The *Bardo Thodol* (“*Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State”),* otherwise known as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (circa 1350 C.E.) introduced the notion that hallucinations play a major role in death and dying.

[3] The *Ars moriendi* ("*The Art of Dying*") are two related Latin texts dating from 1415 (the long version) and 1450 (the short version) which introduced legalistic protocols to ensure a “good death” (i.e., dying with a clear conscience). It is considered the first guide devoted to death and dying written in Western literature.

[4] In 1758, Emanuel Swedenborg published detailed descriptions of heaven and the afterlife, which he claimed were divinely revealed to him.

[5] Circa 1770, William Hunter revolutionized funerary practice through the development and introduction of arterial embalming techniques, although formaldehyde (the main ingredient in today's embalming fluid) would not be discovered until 1855 by Alexander Michailowitsch Butlerow.

[6] In 1871, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor claimed that our concepts of the soul and the afterlife arose from ancient preliterate ancestors mistaking their dreams of dead friends and family members for real-life otherworldly visitations.

[7] In 1892, Albert Heim presented his findings on the reported experiences of climbers who survived deadly falling accidents. This is generally considered the first systematic study of what would eventually be called "near-death experiences."

[8] In 1896, Victor Egger proposed the term *experience of imminent death* to describe the "life review" that climbers said they experienced during falls from great heights.

[9] In 1901, Duncan MacDougall conducted experiments to weigh the human soul, measuring its weight to be 21.3 grams. His findings were contested and dismissed by the scientific community.

[10] In 1903, the term *thanatology* (the study of death) was coined by Élie Metchnikoff. He also coined the terms *immunology* (the study of the immune system) and *gerontology* (the study of old age).

[11] Circa 1930, Hudson Hoagland discovered the experience of time can be altered by such factors as stress, feverish temperature, and restricting oxygen to the brain. Later researchers discovered that restricting oxygen to the brain will result in hallucinations and euphoria.

[12] In 1942, Asa Roy Martin published his research regarding past-life regression therapy. Past-life regression therapy uses hypnosis to recover what practitioners believe are memories of former lives.

[13] The term *out-of-body experience* was coined in 1943 by G. N. M. Tyrell.

[14] In 1959, Herman Feifel, known as the founder of modern death psychology, edited and published a groundbreaking volume of thanatological essays titled *The Meaning of Death*.

[15] In 1966, Ian Stevenson published his research on the validity of claims made by young children regarding memories from a previous life, suggesting their testimonies were evidence

of reincarnation. Mainstream scientists dismissed his research, finding his investigative methods flawed.

[16] In 1967, Dame Cicely Saunders established the first modern-day hospice facility. She is the founder of the modern hospice movement and a pioneer of palliative care.

[17] Celia Green conducted the first scientific study of out-of-body experiences in 1968, attributing them to a variety of traceable neuropsychological disruptions and impairments.

[18] Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced the Kübler-Ross Model in 1969 to explain the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance) associated with death and dying.

[19] In 1971, Robert Monroe published his research on out-of-body experiences, and soon after he developed Hemi-Sync technology, which uses sound to help access such experiences.

[20] Raymond Moody coined the term *near-death experience* in 1975 to describe the phenomena commonly associated with death and dying.

[21] In 1977, Russell Noyes and Roy Kletti introduced the notion of depersonalization to explain certain phenomena associated with near-death experiences. Depersonalization involves a series of psychological defense mechanisms that are triggered by life-threatening situations.

[22] In 1977, Gunther von Hagens developed the plastination technique to preserve organs and whole bodies for public display.

[23] In 1980, Kenneth Ring introduced the Weighted Core Experience Index in order to identify and measure aspects of near-death experiences.

[24] In 1982, Daniel Carr published his research on the role of endorphins during near-death experiences.

[25] In 1986, Melvin Morse published his research on the near-death experiences of children.

[26] In 1988, Pim van Lommel launched a large-scale study of near-death experiences spanning ten hospitals. Of the 344 cardiac arrest patients involved in the study, only 12% reported definite near-death experiences.

[27] Circa 1990, Rick Strassman introduced the DMT Model to explain visions and perceptions commonly associated with the near-death experience.

[28] In 1993, Susan Blackmore presented the Dying Brain Hypothesis to scientifically explain certain phenomena associated with near-death experiences.

[29] In 1998, Jeffrey Long established the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation, which now has the largest collection of publicly accessible near-death experience accounts in the world.

[30] In the year 2000, Karl Jansen introduced the Ketamine Model to explain visions and perceptions commonly associated with the near-death experience.

[31] In 2002, J. Martin Strangeweather (under the pseudonym J. J. Martin) published an article in *California Pop* magazine (issue #5) introducing the mechanics underlying the hyper-dilation of dream time during the dying brain process, now known as the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis (EAH), describing how we might *relativistically experience an eternity of our own conditioning.* This is the only scientific model of death that allows for the possibility of a seemingly eternal afterlife which arises from a "perfect storm" of factors such as the restriction of oxygen to the brain, the release of powerful neurochemicals associated with dreams and hallucinations, a massive surge of synaptic excitation associated with memory retrieval and decision-making, and the shutdown of various centers of the brain responsible for our sense of the passage of time.

[32] In 2003, Gary Schwartz published his research on the use of psychics (i.e., mediums) to provide evidence of life after death. The scientific community dismissed his findings, deeming his investigative methods flawed.

[33] In 2005, Olaf Blanke proved it is possible to reliably elicit out-of-body experiences by electrically stimulating the right temporoparietal junction of the brain.

[34] Sam Parnia initiated the AWARE Study in 2008, which tested for memories and awareness during cardiac arrest.

[35] In 2010, Andrew B. Newberg pioneered the field of research known as neurotheology, which is the study of how religious practices affect the brain, and vice versa. Neurotheologists attempt to correlate objective neural activities with subjective spiritual experiences.

[36] In 2011, Michael Nahm and Bruce Greyson published their research on terminal lucidity, which is the return of mental clarity and functional memory in patients with long-term dementia or other severe cognitive disorders (such as Alzheimer's) shortly before death.

[37] In 2013, Jimo Borjigin conducted research proving the brain initiates a burst of electrical activity shortly after the heart stops beating. In an interview with NPR, she said the burst of electrical activity not only indicates the presence of consciousness, but "a kind of hyperconsciousness."

[38] In 2022, Ajmal Zemmar suggested that the massive synaptic activity observed during the dying brain process could result in an experience known as a Life Recall or Life Review, often stated as, "My whole life flashed before my eyes."

Notes Concerning Eternity, part two:
An Introduction to the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis

1. The passage of time is malleable. American neuroscientist Hudson Hoagland (born: 1899 CE, died: 1982 CE) discovered that time is more than just relative to position and momentum—there is a completely different gauge of time inherent to each individual: interoceptive temporality, or psychophysiological time. Interoceptive temporality is a subjective underlying feeling of time based on physiological factors (such as temperature) and psychological factors (such as stress). Each of us views life through an individualized psychophysiological time-lens controlled by our body's internal chemistry. This time-sense can be distorted and even manipulated by altering the body's temperature or its ability to utilize oxygen. The brain relies on its own autonomic rhythms to measure the duration of a moment and the span of events. Mr. Hoagland, studying sick patients, determined that the heightened temperature arising from fever causes a subsequent acceleration of the sense of temporal sequences. Higher temperatures make our cerebral clocks run faster, thereby shortening our perception of time's

passage. Hoagland later realized that restricting the brain's oxygen flow also has the effect of speeding up the sensation of time. As people grow older and become less capable of taking in and processing oxygen, many of them begin to experience the years passing more rapidly. Our minds actually do observe time to move at a faster rate during the elderly stage of life due to oxygen depletion. The perception of time can be shortened to the feeling that every moment is flying by, or it can be elongated to feel as if every moment is crawling in slow motion—the data-processors of our brains can be sped up or slowed down by various biological, chemical, and psychosocial factors. Bottom line, the perception of time can be altered.

2. There is a hyper-dilation of time that occurs during the dying process, when certain regions of the brain responsible for our perception of temporal sequences begin to manage information differently while shutting down. Most of us have never seen a ghost or alien. Most of us have never conversed with an angel or been tempted by a devil (in the literal sense), and none of us has ever breathed underwater or levitated… except in our dreams.

3. Life is the wavering flame of the candle, and eternity lies within the brief moments of a dream. Each human spends their lifetime—their *waking* lifetime—being conditioned as to what they will experience during their final living moments. Will this be a dream or hallucination? No, not technically. It is an *augmented consciousness experience*, or ACE, which involves different processes than dreams and hallucinations, though all such states share common ground. Triggered by overwhelmingly traumatic events (such as dying), the eternity of heaven, hell, nirvana, or anyplace else may be the product of a powerful ACE that occurs hours, minutes, or even seconds before death.

4. Eternity is not out there somewhere. Our afterlife hides within each one of us, and through synaptic overload and the release of various neurochemicals, eternity is conjured in the few moments preceding death as opposed to afterward. This is a working hypothesis, not a religion. While the hypothesis attempts to sidestep the debate between atheism, agnosticism, and theism, its transformative effect on each of these standpoints cannot be overlooked.

5. If time is relative (which indeed it is), and the perception of time were altered enough, could a second be made to feel like a hundred years? And if a hundred years, why not the possibility of stretching the feeling to a thousand years, or even a million? The duration of any given moment is eidetic. Could a perceived eternity be hammered out of any moment if the perception of time were made malleable enough? Everyone knows a dream can seem just as real as our experience of waking reality (for example: wet dreams and nightmares). Our sense of time is recalibrated, re-temporalized, every morning upon awakening back into the world of schedules, sunsets, and seasons, but what if we never awoke? What would happen if the waking world's influence of clock time and mortal linearity were completely unavailable to us as reference points from which to arrange the order of our perceived moments?

6. Thus, it is within the quick spark of living that the groundwork for infinity is laid, and without running afoul of paradox, eternity could exist in the shallow span of a millisecond.

7. The womb from which all afterlives are born could very well turn out to be a subjective, culturally influenced interpretation of the otherworldly experience produced by the synergistic interplay of (a) an oversaturation of carbon dioxide due to oxygen deprivation*, (b) a surge of synaptic activity, particularly in regions of the brain associated with memory**, (c) the shutdown of certain regions of the brain responsible for our sense of duration and the passage of time***, and (d) the bombardment of various neurochemicals associated with dreams and hallucinations during extremely traumatic events such as near-death experiences and the final stage of dying****.

* see *Notes Concerning Eternity: Oxygen Deprivation and the Dying Brain Process*

** see *Notes Concerning Eternity: The Light that Shines Within* and *Notes Concerning Eternity: A Neurocellular Explanation for the Manifestation of the Eidetic Afterlife During the Dying Brain Process*

*** see *Notes Concerning Eternity: The Physiology of Temporal Perception and Distortion During the Dying Brain Process*

**** see *Notes Concerning Eternity: A Psychopharmacological Explanation for the Manifestation of the Eidetic Afterlife During the Dying Brain Process*

8. While the eidetic afterlife hypothesis has intriguing psychological and sociological implications, it also serves as a profound event in rhetorical criticism: a contemporary rearticulation of immortality and the afterlife in a secular framework that does not invalidate religious phenomenology. Indeed, the *Notes Concerning Eternity* provide detailed and scientifically plausible explanations for every phenomenon associated with near-death experiences and the afterlife, including time dilation, feelings of universal oneness, out-of-body experiences, terminal lucidity, life reviews, reuniting with the deceased, visions of heaven or hell, and encountering the divine light.

9. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis is in no way meant to invalidate or replace mainstream systems of spirituality. The hypothesis simply avoids metaphysical issues altogether. Inverting the popular conception of life after death into a borderline pre-death experience has many beneficial consequences in the "real" world, not the least of which is cultural unification. The understanding that each of us experiences our own specific afterlife promotes fellowship and tolerance among all religions. We are all fellow dreamers, though our dreams may differ.

10. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis leads to a unique system of ethics not reliant on the dictates of one hypothetical otherworldly authority or another. Instead, each of us holds ourselves directly accountable. This means total responsibility is assumed in every action of every waking moment. There are no rhetorical stratagems to ease you of the horror, shame, and despair you create during your life's journey. You are your own judge, and you cannot deceive yourself. No amount of "Hail Marys" will rid you of the guilt that was never honestly resolved. Ego defense mechanisms acquired in the waking world to fool yourself into contentment will be of no use

during your last breath. Dreams and the subconscious have a will of their own to dredge up things forgotten or suppressed.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part three:
Oxygen Deprivation and the Dying Brain Process

Q: What happens when oxygen is restricted to the brain?

A: An alteration of the experience of time, feelings of euphoria, visions of tunnels and other hallucinatory images.

Near-death visions of a tunnel of light and feelings of euphoria can be attributed to carbon dioxide retention, known as hypoxia (reduced oxygen to the brain) or anoxia (complete absence of oxygen in the brain). In the 2002 British Broadcasting Corporation documentary, *The Day I Died: The Mind, the Brain, and Near-Death Experiences*, British psychophysiologist Susan Blackmore explains: “The tunnel, for example, seems very clear how and why you get these dark tunnels with the bright light at the end. We know how the cells in the visual system are laid out. Right from the retina and the back of the eye, all the way through the visual system to the

visual cortex at the back of your brain here [pointing], there are lots of cells devoted to the middle of the visual field—what you are looking at—and very few devoted towards the outside. Now, what happens when you go into severe shock, when you have lack of oxygen, is all the cells start firing randomly. Now, what's that going to look like? With lots of cells devoted towards the middle and very few towards the outside, it's going to look like bright light in the middle, dark towards the outside. Now, you are nearly unconscious with your eyes shut, and this is all you can see, so it feels like going forwards through a tunnel into a bright light."

"Another thing that we understand pretty well is the emotional effects [of oxygen deprivation]," continues Susan, "because under stress and with shock and lack of oxygen (such as in a state of hypoxia or anoxia), you get a massive flood of endorphins, the brain's own morphine-like chemicals, especially dopamine, which has the effect of taking away pain, making you feel everything is absolutely fine, giving you a very positive attitude towards everything."

https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc948094/m2/1/high_res_d/34-1%205.%20Holden%20cx%202018.pdf?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0w6Zjwsu8c5pvx5rBXgysrd8-8sokDQCIIP8VF9jlJrmgujqyUYfdVgxo_aem_m7O2J2JZHgQR8Othi2BdOA

A friend recently asked me: "Do you have faith in the eidetic afterlife hypothesis? Do you actually believe in the eidetic afterlife hypothesis?"

Short answer: No.

Long answer: I neither believe the hypothesis nor disbelieve it. As far as afterlife conceptions go, the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is the most plausible, as it involves physical mechanics that can be researched, unlike other afterlife conceptions. But the eidetic afterlife hypothesis isn't meant to invalidate other (more metaphysical) conceptions of the afterlife. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis isn't a metaphysical system. It perhaps explains a sublime event that occurs at the very end of the human dying process, unveiling the dynamics of a momentous transitional phase that every major religion has attempted to define and claim as its own expression. Heaven and hell are scientifically unexplorable terrains, as is the reincarnation process of Buddhists and Hindus. Even the complete dissolution of consciousness upon death espoused by atheists cannot be proven. We can, however, connect visions of "a light at the end of a dark tunnel" with retinal ischemia, and we can connect out-of-body experiences with temporoparietal lesions and impairments to the anterior precuneus, and we can connect the experience of one's whole life flashing before their eyes with the synaptic hyperactivity resulting from oxygen-deprived neurons, and we can connect feelings of bliss with dopamine and other neurotransmitters, and we can connect the experience/feeling of living forever with the shutting down of various centers of the brain responsible for our sense of the passage of time, in conjunction with Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity and the stranger aspects of quantum mechanics, and we can connect the landscapes (mindscapes) of heaven, hell, or even Valhalla with a lifetime of psychosocial conditioning.

I’m not starting a new religion, or looking for any charitable donations. I’m a professional rabbit hole spelunker, and this is my latest rabbit hole, an exceptionally deep one.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part four:
The Light that Shines Within

[1] Patients undergoing the final stage of the dying process are known to exhibit greater than normal electrical activity in the brain. A study led by Jimo Borjigin, Ph.D., found that parts of the brain designated as the “hot zone”* for consciousness become extremely active with high-frequency electrical signals called gamma waves moments after taking dying patients off their ventilator. In one patient the signals remained detectable for more than six minutes. “As she died, [the patient’s] brain was functioning in a kind of hyperdrive,” reported Borjigin. “For about two minutes after her oxygen was cut off, there was an intense synchronization of her brain waves, a state associated with many cognitive functions, including heightened attention and memory. The synchronization dampened for about 18 seconds, then intensified again for more than four minutes. It faded for a minute, then came back for a third time.”

*The “hot zone” of consciousness in the brain is located in the junction between the temporal, parietal and occipital lobes. In prior brain studies, this area has been correlated with dreaming, hallucinations, and other altered states of consciousness.

According to Borjigin, “Different parts of [the dying patient’s] brain were suddenly in close communication with each other. The most intense connections started immediately after her oxygen stopped, and lasted for nearly four minutes. There was another burst of connectivity more than five minutes and 20 seconds after she was taken off life support. In particular, areas of her brain associated with processing conscious experience – areas that are active when we move through the waking world, and when we have vivid dreams – were communicating with those involved in memory formation. So were parts of the brain associated with empathy. Even as she slipped irrevocably deeper into death, something that looked astonishingly like life was taking place over several minutes in [the dying patient’s] brain.”

https://www.michiganmedicine.org/health-lab/evidence-conscious-activity-dying-brain?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR1bp6yZy1wi3wPAsZJJdMk5sN23M66NUEqBxccOZKWypdZno4T9221X7cc_aem_tbtSH8SEmID889sWFmRjWQ

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/02/new-science-of-death-brain-activity-consciousness-near-death-experience?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0qDyFYFZ7jA4SpIV9rz2pkF_D5Yq_GVbleTVnD4Fsxar7Fs4U3dNXmwSY_aem_xuZvPHNZSxDQ6n9DrN7cHw

[2] Ajmal Zemmar, Ph.D., conducted similar studies of brain activity in dying patients. In Ajmal’s own words, “We measured 900 seconds of brain activity around the time of death and set a specific focus to investigate what happened in the 30 seconds before and after the heart stopped beating. Just before and after the heart stopped working, we saw [an increase] in a specific band of neural oscillations, so-called gamma oscillations, but also in others such as delta, theta, alpha and beta oscillations.” Neural oscillations, also called brain waves, are associated with cognition, specifically such functions as thinking, remembering, and dreaming.

https://louisville.edu/medicine/news/first-ever-recording-of-a-dying-human-brain-shows-waves-similar-to-memory-flashbacks?fbclid=IwY2xjawMp9aZleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHeJaWyRdt0Wb_k-66GuuhV2VZ9E2ylT990MugMaOSgjcM20sDUu-xkq6uA_aem_5YlPMrbkFdQT34QB23ujAw

[3] “[Studies reveal] that during anoxia, or oxygen deprivation, the brain undergoes a series of changes, including a massive release of glutamate and a surge in gamma and beta waves, potentially linked to near-death experiences. This is followed by a ‘wave of death’—a high-amplitude wave marking the transition towards total cessation of brain activity.”

It should be noted that the “wave of death” originates in the fifth layer of the neocortex, also called the “internal pyramidal layer.”

https://neurosciencenews.com/death-brain-neuroscience-25356/?fbclid=IwY2xjawMp9ctleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHeJaWyRdt0Wb_k-66GuuhV2VZ9E2ylT990MugMaOSgjcM20sDUu-xkq6uA_aem_5YlPMrbkFdQT34QB23ujAw#:~:text=The%20'wave%20of%20death'%20in,possibility%20of%20preserving%20brain%20function

Let's end this installment of notes with an appropriate poem:

Quantum of Consciousness

In the end
Your brain will light up
Like a sacred candle
With bound starlight
The light of memory
Relaying, repaying, replaying
All that has transpired

You are the synaptic light
Now freed
Neither here nor there
But everywhere
In superposition
Immeasurable
Until measured

-- J. Martin Strangeweather

Notes Concerning Eternity, part five:
The Phenomenology of Time Travel During the Dying Brain Process

[1] We all have an internal sense of time which is based on autonomic biorhythms and brain wave oscillations. This internal sense of time manifests itself to our conscious awareness as a subjective sense of time, which we've framed in an objectivization of time, or "clock time" (our mathematical grid of one-directional [causally forward] external-world chronometrical increments denoting the sequential permutation of objects and their interrelationships).

[2] We experience the past (in the form of memory) as not-the-present because we have an awareness that we are mired in another time, namely the present, or now. But what if that awareness was absent? What if we were disconnected from the outside world's stimuli (which is constantly calibrating and organizing our sense of continued identity throughout time)? Would we experience intangible memories of the past as physical events happening in the

present? Wakeful consciousness knows that past events are not physically happening in the present, because wakeful consciousness has a firmly entrenched sense that one event happens after another, and for us to remember the past entails we must be currently proceeding in another event. But what if the organizational element of our events malfunctions or is overloaded, such as during the synaptic overload associated with the final stage of the dying process while certain regions of the brain responsible for our perception of time are progressively deactivating? Every memory that came into awareness would be perceived to be physically occurring in the present. Take a moment to ponder this. I have just provided you with a plausible description of the components and process of an endogenous version of time travel!

[3] To put it another way, let's say there are two versions of awareness occurring whenever you remember something in the waking world: there's the version of you experiencing the memory somewhere in an intangible "inner world", and the version of you that is firmly in the present of the tangible "outer world" and aware that you are experiencing a memory. But what if circumstances turned off the version of awareness connected to the present and tangible "outer world"? Your awareness would then be limited to the experience of the memory alone. For all intents and purposes, you would be fully in the memory. It's important to note that you won't necessarily be replaying the memory like a video (which can only replay the same content). This is because a vestige of your "consciousness in the present" will still be intact, namely your will (i.e., your power to alter circumstances). You will be reliving the scene as opposed to replaying it, and the hallucinatory process of dying will assuredly be altering these memories in unforeseeable ways. Again, this is essentially time travel.

[4] Accounts of near-death experiences often describe a feeling of letting go of the body, and indeed the dying process is a letting go of one's "outer world" bodily connection/association/awareness, and entering fully into the experience of memory mutated by imagination fueled by exotic psychoactive substances and stretched to its utmost limits.

[5] No one remembers going to sleep. There is no such conscious experience as crossing the gap from the outer world of wakefulness to the inner world of dreams. One moment you're awake, the next moment you're in a dream with no memory of going to bed and falling asleep. Homer referred to sleep as "death's little brother." Buddha said sleep was "the small death." Edgar Allen Poe wrote of sleep, "Sleep—those little slices of death, how I loathe them."

Notes Concerning Eternity, part six:
The Physiology of Temporal Perception and Distortion During the Dying Brain Process

[1] What does it mean to slow down a thought, or the thinking process? Does your comprehension of the moment slow down? Does perception slow down as well? Do thinking and comprehension and perception slow down at an equal rate? Is your mind even capable of being aware of these changes? However you answer these questions, you wind up in a timeless moment, a moment of extreme psychological dislocation from wherever your death is physically occurring.

[2] In order to understand outer world time, we must first have a sense of time itself, an inner world of timing. If we take the inner world of time as fundamental to comprehending outer world time, then any significant alteration of the inner world sense of time will result in a

significant alteration of the outer world sense of time. The dying process represents a significant alteration to our inner world timing.

[3] There's an obvious correlation between temporal perception and cognitive functions. Research has proven that the frontal cortex, parietal cortex, basal ganglia, cerebellum, and hippocampus are regions of the brain related to the perception of time, organizing and interpreting information in fractions of milliseconds, seconds, and minutes (depending on the type of information and its level of complexity), and the suprachiasmatic nucleus of the hypothalamus synchronizes circadian rhythms (i.e., our sleeping and waking cycles). Research has also proven that the sense of time may pass slowly or quickly (or become altogether jumbled) depending on the state of these neural time processors. Impairment of these neural time processors leads to perceptual temporal distortions. Studies involving patients with psychiatric and neurological conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, depression, and schizophrenia have demonstrated a pronounced distortion in their perception of time.

[4] Damage to the motor supplementary area leads to distortions in the production of autonomic rhythms and the perception of duration. Damage to the parietal and prefrontal cortex leads to distortions in the perception of the duration of minutes. Damage to the basal ganglia leads to distortions in the perception of the duration of seconds and milliseconds. Damage to the cerebellum leads to distortions in the perception of the duration of milliseconds. Damage to the hippocampus leads to distortions in the organization of the events which make up one's past. Damage to the right temporoparietal junction leads to an inability to discriminate sub-second durations between successive events. Now factor in the synaptic hyperactivity of the "wave of death" associated with the final stage of the dying brain process. What this all amounts to is the experiencing of greater volumes of information in successively shorter durations of time, though the information is gapped, but your subjective experience will not experience the gaps, for how can experience feel the gaps of experience?

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4830363/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR09jEfQ9BGOTR9njK8fH2fwf49-UefLNq146QPBTZ8w5TwP4-JYy-NpmJc_aem_tCNLRMh46gijjnOG12ut8A#:~:text=Moreover%2C%20the%20diverse%20brain%20regions,of%20milliseconds%2C%20seconds%20and%20minutes

[5] There is no such experience as an objective sense of time. We can have objective measurements of time, but not experiences, because the experience of time is all in your head. This plays an important role in the eidetic afterlife hypothesis.

[6] Our waking sense of time is based on the duration for certain bodily movements associated with certain tasks to occur, like walking down the hallway or reaching for a glass of water. But once the physicality which determines the rate of bodily movement is removed from consideration, what does the sense of time have to base itself on? This partly explains why dreams that last mere minutes can be experienced as lasting hours, days, weeks, or even years. The majority of dreams last five to twenty minutes, but dream time is not bound by clock time.

[7] While undergoing the process of dying, you are likely to experience: vastly alternating judgments regarding duration, a deceleration of the internal clock, attention deficits, memory organization and retrieval deficits coupled with memory overload. Now add endogenous DMT, dopamine, and other neurochemical influences to the experience.

[8] The mind is different from the brain, even though they are strongly correlated. At some point during the dying process the brain's activity will slow to zero functionality, causing your mental image-maker to decelerate until it reaches a state of imperceptible change. Your consciousness at this point would not be aware of this imperceptible change, because your consciousness would *be* in the subjective state of this imperceptible change. The very last thing (vision? dream? hallucination?) you experience (while undergoing the dying process, as opposed to whatever initiated the process) could very well be frozen in your mind, a timeless scene stretched across the infinitesimal gap between consciousness and non-consciousness. Let's call this outcome of the dying process "the timeless moment."

[9] The electrical signals in your central nervous system travel between 80 meters and 300 meters per second. Tubulin molecular interactions happen in a matter of nanoseconds.

[10] We don't know the fine-grained workings of consciousness. We know the brain/mind interprets reality at the scale of milliseconds and nanoseconds, but does it keep interpreting at finer scales of temporality? At what point in the timescale of the dying process does the slowing of consciousness come to a halt? A feeling of experiencing eternity (as has been claimed in many near-death experiences) would logically precede "the timeless moment," though eternity and timelessness are completely different concepts.

[11] When we give attention to something (or focus on something), we devote a greater part of processing power to the task at hand, altering our subjective sense of time and expectation of duration. The emotional content involved in the task (e.g., is it painful or pleasurable?) will likewise alter our subjective sense of time and expectation of duration.

[12] Acetylcholine has been shown to affect memory and time perception. Flooding the frontal and parietal cortex with an abnormal amount of acetylcholine (as research has indicated may occur naturally during the dying brain process) would surely have a pronounced effect on the dying brain's experience of memory retrieval and perception of duration.

[13] Aside from clock time and circadian rhythms, there are four systems of memory involved with temporal perception: 1) semantic memory (responsible for processing concepts and language), 2) procedural memory (involved in the performance of relatively automatic movements and learned movements), 3) working memory (responsible for processing information about current or recent events) and 4) episodic memory (responsible for processing, storing, and retrieving one's personal past information, i.e., experiences occurring in one's daily routine, including information about the time and place of events).

[14] Perception relies heavily on memory. The perception of time is based largely on the time it takes for the frontal cortex to store new information, recover prior information (whether from short-term or long-term memory), and synthesize the two. Perceived events are made up of static conscious moments, each produced by the brain about five times per second. Once the level of synaptic activity in the brain drops below a certain threshold, forgetfulness takes place. Conversely, we may conjecture that once synaptic activity rises above a certain threshold (such as during the hyper-synaptic "death wave" observed during the final stage of the dying brain process), quantum entanglement takes place. It is important to note that the rate of interaction between entangled quantum particles is **faster than the speed of light!** What effect would this have on your sense of mind and perception of time? Take a moment to ponder this. Let's call this outcome of the dying process "the eternal superposition."

[15] It's important to note that "the timeless moment" and "the eternal superposition" are not the only ways to envision the final subjective experience of the dying brain process, though they seem the most probable for now (given our current level of understanding). The eidetic afterlife hypothesis doesn't claim to know what happens after the ultimate point of no return, it only describes what might be happening right up until that point. It's decidedly unreligious, though it isn't anti-religion. The great mystery still remains the great mystery after the eidetic afterlife hypothesis has had its say. The hypothesis does, however, free us from certain age-old dogmas, providing a new launch pad for our intellect and imagination to resume exploring one of life's most important subjects: death!

Notes Concerning Eternity, part seven:
The Psychological Mechanics of Heaven

[1] We did not come from the void. Our consciousness was not spawned from nothingness. We were created from love, or at the very least an act of passion. All of us hail from the paradisiacal womb (in essence the same womb, but housed in different mothers in different countries), and it's likely we'll return there someday, albeit in a different form. According to the logic of the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis, one could argue that heaven awaits us all at the final stage of the dying brain process, even if you've lived a hellish existence. And by heaven I mean: a feeling of bliss, a feeling of oneness with the cosmos, and a feeling of timelessness, all of which you experienced in a primal fashion during your nine-month gestation period in the womb.

[2] The earliest part of the brain to form will be the last part to shut down—the brainstem, formed while inside the womb, whereas the cerebral cortex develops most of its synaptic connections after birth. Could the "total life recall" moment that occurs during the "death

wave" of hyper-synaptic activity, augmented through an overload of acetylcholine (which is involved in the retrieval of memories), result in remembering as far back as your earliest memories and perceptions in the womb, before fear and suffering were introduced to your consciousness, before the separation from your tranquil existence in paradise, before ego and desire overtook you, when your every need was taken care of by the loving mother goddess that was your entire universe?

[3] This could explain why a common claim of the near-death experience is a feeling of oneness with the universe, along with feelings of peace and supreme love, all of which resemble the state we would have felt during our gestation period, when we were indeed one with the universe which bore us, before anything negative could enter our prenatal minds, when the living deity did in fact care directly for our well-being.

[4] Perhaps after we face judgment for everything we've done in life (during the hyper-synaptic moment of total recall), and the layers of our brain progressively deteriorate from outermost cortex to innermost brainstem, transporting us back to memories and perceptions formed along with the formation of the brain itself, all of us end up in a purified state, readmitted into the paradise we were initially expelled from. We all have a preconceived notion/template of paradise to draw upon, the Womb: a time when we were naked and innocent, completely connected to our creator. A timeless period when suffering and death were unknown.

[5] Paradise won't be the same as when you left. The intrauterine experience will have been transformed by your lifetime of conditioning, not to mention the effect dopamine, endogenous DMT, and other mind-altering neurotransmitters (released during the dying brain process) will have on your portrayal/re-creation of paradise. But the initial feelings of an absence of suffering, direct cosmic connection, and being *outside of time* should still translate somehow. In the very end, all you will have to draw upon is the very beginning.

[6] If you're wondering if someone could really recall every moment of their life in exact detail, the answer is probably no, but they could recall enough moments to *feel* like they're recalling their entire life, especially with the augmentation of the hyper-synaptic activity that occurs during the "wave of death" [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part four, section 3] and a drastic boost in acetylcholine [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part six, section 12].

A handful of humans in any given generation have a condition known as hyperthymesia—the ability to remember vivid scenes from every day of their life (excluding infancy), but they cannot remember *every moment* of every day of their life. For instance, a hyperthymesiac might be able to tell you what the weather was like twenty-three years ago on June 2nd, while having no memory whatsoever about what they ate for breakfast that day. A different hyperthymesiac might be able to tell you what they had for breakfast forty-eight years ago on October 15th, while having no memory whatsoever about the clothes they wore that day.

[7] For us to have memories of being in the womb, our capacity for memory had to be present at some point during our gestation period. When are fetuses capable of having their first feelings, perceptions, and memories?

Memory: Evidence suggests fetal memory begins working as early as the second trimester after conception (approximately 13 to 27 weeks into the pregnancy), and there is undeniable evidence for fetal memories by week 30. The gestation period for a human is typically 9 months, or approximately 39 weeks. If memory is fully functional at 30 weeks, and the typical gestation period is 39 weeks, that leaves 9 weeks of working memory in the womb. Try to imagine what the passing of 9 weeks would feel like before the introduction of external-world time, while the brain is still developing its sense(s) of temporality!

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/recall-in-utero/?fbclid=IwY2xjawMp9mdleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHdULQEZCrc3hkAN0BcwQO9_Tx-FYrJge2SgoSgtHNDFYfj0iRvrvGFlrPg_aem_y2u5lkkF5OtKwotFMAT5yQ

Perception: Fetuses have been observed to respond to audible stimuli as early as 16 weeks after conception, with the auditory system becoming fully functional approximately 25 weeks into gestation.

https://www.sciencedirect.com/.../abs/pii/S1527336908001347?fbclid=IwY2xjawMp9pRleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHWovzaK4TxmlDxI_ZlTTuUv-T3tqgS1ArVkpyAZLRitjLv4sS7uImpmy4g_aem_Ov90qK93DnDK66S822I3pw

Feeling: Scientific studies have proven conclusively that fetuses are responsive to pain by the 25th week of gestation (from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists).

https://www.acog.org/.../gestational-development-capacity?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR3iWlskXbdFm_5PuuhrroVdlWfRNspU_fdDLoDGjkoI3DNtLA1LvsZKurg_aem_5YlPMrbkFdQT34QB23ujAw

Let’s end off with an appropriate poem:

Heaven On Earth

We seek the paradise we once knew
before we learned to sculpt the sky
into echoes of Eden with our teeth, lips and tongue,
when the voice of deity unseen spoke directly to us,
taking care of all our needs,
enveloped in love,
when we were timeless in the womb.

--Strangeweather

Notes Concerning Eternity, part eight:
The Eidetic Deity Within You

[1] Let me make this perfectly clear: The eidetic afterlife hypothesis is not an explanation of existence, although it does shed light on one of the great mysteries of existence. Nor does the eidetic afterlife hypothesis attempt to explain what or who the Creator of the universe is (God with a capital “G”). It is merely a well-researched description of what occurs during the dying brain process, a description which accords (for the most part) with religious, psychological, and scientific sensibilities.

[2] Those who reduce mind to matter invariably fail to realize how mystifying matter becomes at the quantum and Planck scales of reality.

[3] We all have an individualized tripartite deity that dwells within us. The first aspect of the tripartite deity is the Judge, invariably associated with the “total life recall” phase of the dying

brain process [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part sixteen, part seventeen, and part eighteen]. The Judge is the collective unconscious from which you partake—the spirit of the world (or more accurately your specific geographic and socioeconomic placement) and the zeitgeist of the times, which might be accompanied by the appearance of a Compassionate Savior Mechanism and/or the deific personification of your life's conditioning. The second aspect of the tripartite deity is the Mother and the Womb [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part seven], also known as Heaven and Paradise and Eternity (much like Hades is considered both a god and a realm). The third aspect of the tripartite deity is the Great Mystery [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part nineteen], or confronting whatever awaits you at the threshold of the ultimate transition, i.e., death, which is not to say the mere ending of consciousness, the way a light bulb ceases emitting photons when you flip the switch off. It is called the Great Mystery precisely because nothing whatsoever about it can be known by us mortals, mired as we are in time and three-dimensional physicality. Although personal identity might have to be forfeited at this point, one's subjectively perceived eternity of heavenly bliss (the second aspect of the tripartite deity) will most likely prepare one for the abandonment of such egocentric illusions.

[4] To be alive, you must have a body. To be conscious, you must have a world. The world is your consciousness. This sense of the world is embodied in the first aspect of the tripartite deity—the Judge, though the Judge could also be understood as the Guide or the Mentor, depending on your overall disposition and the manner in which you've conducted yourself throughout your life's journey.

[5] The psyche is like a whirlwind touching down upon the earthen plane and gathering up the body and its attendant angles of experience (i.e., perceptions and memories), which appear to give the whirlwind its form, its being, but the things a whirlwind gathers are not the actual essence of the whirlwind—the whirlwind is born of atmospheric forces, to which it eventually becomes re-absorbed.

[6] Thoughts have zero dimensionality. Look at a chair: it is three-dimensional. Now look at a chair on your computer screen: it is two-dimensional. But your thoughts are not displayed to you on a screen. Now imagine a chair. How many dimensions does your imagined image have? Maybe it only has one dimension, you might be saying to yourself in an effort to sustain the belief that all manifestations of reality have dimensionality. But one dimension is simply a point, and you certainly aren't envisioning a point as a chair. So maybe the thought is occurring in some higher form of dimensionality—the fifth dimension of hyperspace and hypergeometry! But why the fifth dimension, and not the sixth or seventh, or the fifty-third? Are you imaging the chair as some type of hypergeometrical object or endless fractal? Is that what you're seeing in your mind's eye? Of course not! Again, imagine the chair. Does the imagined image have dimensionality? The simplest answer is no, even though your indoctrinated logic struggles to dispute this conclusion. The thought of the chair is indeed associated with biochemical process occurring within your brain, but the imagined chair itself is not physically present in your head, or any other part of your body (contrary to the concept of the Platonic soul, which consisted of three parts: *logos*, *thymos*, and *eros*; *logos* was related to reason and located in the head,

thymos was related to emotions and located in the heart, and *eros* was related to desire and located in the stomach).

[7] Thought exists in time but nowhere in space. Yet a thought is also timeless. The same thought/imagining/memory may manifest numerous times throughout the course of your life and across innumerable lifetimes of those who share your experience. Thoughts take on a life of their own, sometimes revealing secrets to you, sometimes playing tricks on you, much like a conjured spirit. God is likewise often described as an immaterial-but-real-and-active-force beyond time and space.

[8] Humans have an inborn tendency to anthropomorphize reality whenever possible.

[9] "It is only through the psyche that we can establish that God acts upon us , but we are unable to distinguish whether these actions emanate from God or from the unconscious. We cannot tell whether God and the unconscious are two different entities." –Carl Jung

[10] There is a mode of being which allows for the *seemingly* volitional (self-aware) manipulation of certain expressions of the world/cosmos. Humans are an example of such a mode of being. The self-aware mode of being could in and of itself be likened to a being, the being through which all volition emanates, i.e., God.

[11] There is only one mind, of which we partake, just as there is only one world from which we all partake. The mind is a singularity that gathers information and expresses itself through a multiplicity of subjective physical observers, just as every single physical observer is comprised of multiple relativistic experiential states, just as every single ommatidium forms the compound eye. We are the cosmic ommatidia.

[12] In the year 1899, Sigmund Freud (the founder of psychoanalysis) colonized the collective psyche of humanity and tried to commandeer all our dreams by defining the symbolisms and mechanisms of subconscious expression, publishing his seminal work, *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Freud explained that psychic energy (i.e., thoughts and moods, not clairvoyance and psychokinesis) is an actual form of energy, subject to the Law of Conservation of Energy, which states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only assume different manifestations. If negative psychic energy (which commonly results from mental and physical abuse) isn't *actively* released through positive channels (such as art, music, writing, prayer, community service, psychotherapy, etc.) it will *passively* express itself through negative channels of neurosis (such as depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and a wide variety of phobias). Neurosis is universal, according to Freud. Being a social animal takes its toll on us all. Freud believed the primary aim of psychoanalysis is to get you to consciously recognize and be honest about the embarrassing/shameful contents of your unconscious, which protects itself from scrutiny through misdirection and a self-inflicted form of amnesia. The way Freud talks about it, you'd think we have multiple minds.

[13] Carl Jung (the founder of analytical psychology) was a short-term disciple of Sigmund Freud. Jung conjectured that our personalities are reducible to one of two mutually exclusive types of attitude combined with four faculties of cognition. The two polaric attitudes are “introversion” (the shy, quiet, loner type—those who focus their psychic energy inward) and “extroversion” (the outgoing, talkative, flirty type—those who focus their psychic energy outward), and the four cognitive faculties are: logic, intuition, emotion, and perception. Like his mentor Freud, Jung believed the human mind was a confluence of two distinct perceptual frames: the conscious and the unconscious. But Jung further divided the unconscious into the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The personal unconscious is the accumulation of repressed memories from our subjective history. The collective unconscious is the psychological imprint left by countless generations of evolution, a morphogenetic psychophysical residue. The very structure of our psyche has been shaped by the remote experiences of our many ancestral incarnations, sharing over three billion years of common perceptions, like the daily appearance and disappearance of the sun and moon, the sensations of pain and pleasure (i.e., desire and fulfillment, i.e., tension and relief), the will to survive and flourish (i.e., procreate), and the anxiety of being eaten alive or otherwise killed, which eventually led to humanity’s fear of death itself (i.e., fearing the cessation of your personal identity, as opposed to fearing the manner in which you die).

[14] Here's an excerpt from Carl Jung’s book, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*: "[The subconscious] is not concentrated and intensive, but shades off into obscurity; it is highly extensive and can juxtapose the most heterogeneous elements in the most paradoxical way. More than this, it contains, besides an indeterminable number of subliminal perceptions, an immense fund of accumulated inheritance-factors left by one generation of men after another, whose mere existence marks a step in the differentiation of the species. If it were permissible to personify the unconscious, we might call it a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth and death, and, from having at its command a human experience of one or two million years, almost immortal." A paragraph later he writes "The collective unconscious, moreover, seems not to be a person, but something like an unceasing stream or perhaps an ocean of images and figures which drift into consciousness in our dreams or in abnormal states of mind." Elsewhere he states, “We mean by collective unconscious, a certain psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity; from it consciousness has developed."

[15] Thus, the eidetic deity within you (not to be confused with God), understood as thought itself and not any particular manifestation of mentality, is the collective unconscious: immortal, invisible, non-spatial, able to be in multiple places at once, speaking to you through your dreams…

[16] It would be inefficient to have an executive director and endless functionaries recording and evaluating your every deed throughout life. It’s far more cost effective and labor efficient to have you simply do it yourself. Despite whatever else you may be, you are first and foremost a recording device.

[17] Everything in the universe is a quantum computer, including the universe itself.

[18] The Dominican friar and philosopher, Saint Thomas Aquinas, alleviated some of the tension between faith and reason (i.e., religion and the philosophical sciences), establishing both as having their respective places in the realm of knowledge. Philosophy and science should be employed to study the tangible world of the senses. Faith and religion exist to understand the unseen world of the spirit.

Saint Thomas presented five contentions for the existence of God, believing these arguments amounted to indisputable evidence. The first contention states that if you follow every event to its preceding event, you will eventually reach a phenomenon that initiated all other events without itself being initiated—the Uncaused Cause. The second contention states that anything which moves was moved by something prior. If you trace back all of the forces instigating movement, you will eventually arrive at the initial source of all action—the Unmoved Mover. The third contention states that things must come from other things. If you follow the chain of manifestation all the way back to its source, you will eventually arrive at an initial thing that materialized out of nowhere/nothing. Since nothingness could not have created anything of its own accord, something must have caused the initial thing to occur. The fourth contention states that everything in nature (except humanity) behaves according to certain pre-established laws. Everything in nature seems to unwittingly know its role. Saint Thomas believed this was proof that something/someone must be conducting/overseeing the grand design of the cosmos. The fifth contention states that because we have knowledge regarding abstract concepts such as perfection and eternity, but can find none of their examples in reality, we must be apprehending essences from the otherworldly wellspring(s) of these concepts.

[19] Conscious thought distinguishes illusion from reality, but subconscious thought makes no such distinctions. All experiences are equally real/unreal.

[20] As a child, you had a psyche before you had a sense of personal identity, before the world introduced you to your ego. Where was the locus/focus of your psyche during this earliest of phases? It was the world itself, which was everywhere alive and inseparable from you.

[21] The psyche/spirit/subconscious lies outside ourselves during the earliest stages of mental development, coming directly from civilization (i.e., adults) and nature, and gradually comes to rest in the center of our heads (or so we believe) by puberty.

[22] The subconscious arises from nature, and the self-conscious (with its attendant array of neuroses) is born of civilization.

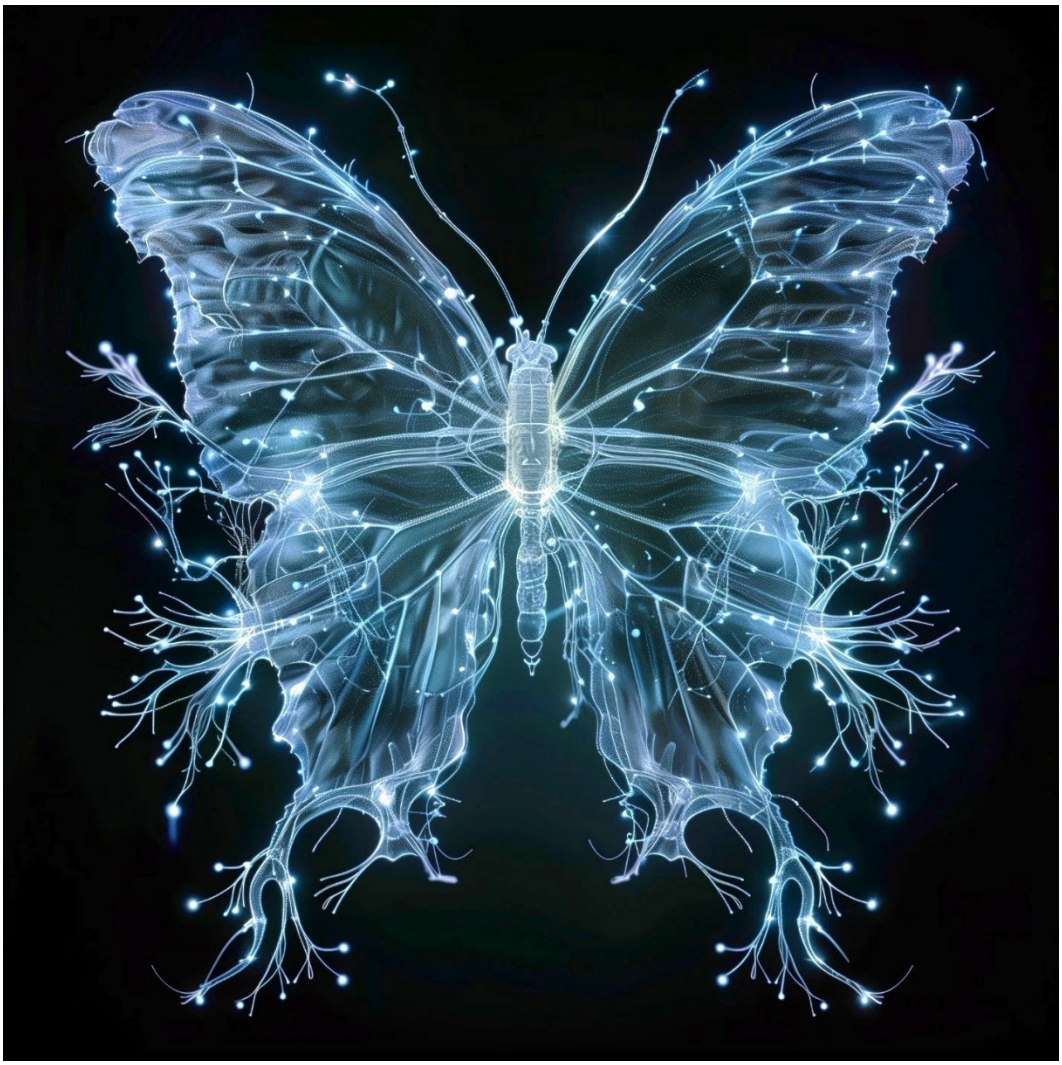
[23] Here’s more on the subject of collective consciousness from Carl Jung: "...in one of its aspects the psyche is not individual, but is derived from the nation, from collectivity, even from all of humanity." In other words a "world-soul", which is another way of saying God, which is another way of saying the eidetic deity within you, but can it truly be said to exist within, or are distinctions such as within and without meaningless at this point?

[24] Do modern-day humans have the need anymore for faith in a higher power? It would seem that most of us still do. Many among us have equated the lack of belief in God (or the Gods) with a lack of repercussions for immoral behavior. Without any sort of belief in metaphysical repercussions such as divine judgment or karma, morality is often reduced to “don’t do it because it’s illegal” or even worse "don't get caught." However, we do have a conscience, which ultimately stems from the collective unconscious, i.e., the eidetic deity within you.

"There appears to be a conscience in mankind which severely punishes the man who does not somehow and at some time, at whatever cost to his pride, cease to defend and assert himself, and instead confess himself fallible and human." –Carl Jung, from *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

[25] Does it really make any difference to our life whether or not we believe in an afterlife? Here’s what Carl Jung concluded: "As a physician I am convinced that it is hygienic--if I may use the word--to discover in death a goal towards which one can strive; and that shrinking away from it is something unhealthy and abnormal which robs the second half of life of its purpose. I therefore consider the religious teaching of a life hereafter consonant with the standpoint of psychic hygiene. [...] From the standpoint of psychotherapy it would therefore be desirable to think of death as only a transition [as opposed to an ending]--one part of a life-process whose extent and duration escape our knowledge." –from *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

[26] The eidetic afterlife hypothesis reinvigorates the God of Judgment, the Goddess of Love and Compassion, and the Eternal Mystery, understanding them as three aspects of the same experience.



Notes Concerning Eternity, part nine:
A Neurocellular Explanation for the Manifestation of the Eidetic Afterlife During the Dying Brain Process

1) It's time to put on your thinking cap. My apologies for the length and complexity of this section of notes, but if you truly want to know the mysterious workings of death and the afterlife, you would be remiss not to take the time to read this. Due to the convolutedness of today's topic, we will start by describing the simple components involved with neurocellular biology and work our way up to the "big picture".

2) The cerebral cortex (also known as gray matter) is made of approximately fifteen billion neurons arranged in cortical columns. Each cortical column has six distinct layers, each of which processes information in its own manner. The basic design of a neuron consists of a cell body, from which grows a number of branching dendrites and a long axon trunk culminating in a bouton. Boutons transmit information, and dendrites receive information. The bouton of one

neuron interacts with the dendrite of a neighboring neuron through synaptic transmissions of information.

3) Your senses take in raw data from the surrounding environment, and your neurons turn this raw data into meaningful information. Neurons are the information-generating cells in the brain. The world you live in is generated by the information generated by the neurons in your brain. Your reality is generated by neurons!

4) Your world is not a given. It is not the only way a world can be perceived and understood. Your version of reality is not the fundamental version of reality.

5) Consciousness is the world itself, and evolution and social conditioning have developed certain channels for certain aspects of the world to enter your field of awareness.

6) Neurons generate information through the firing of electrical action potentials, or spikes. Here's how it works: The axonal bouton of one neuron transmits a signal to the dendrite of an adjacent neuron. If the signal is strong enough, it relays the information to an adjacent neuron, and so on, creating specific pathways of informational flow. During a spike, the membrane of the neural cell momentarily changes, allowing information to pass through. Certain neurons can fire up to 250 times per second.

7) Sodium ions and potassium ions are located inside and outside the neuron, but there is a higher concentration of sodium ions outside the cellular membrane and a higher concentration of potassium ions inside the neuron. Sodium ions are positively charged, and potassium ions are negatively charged. During the action potential (i.e., synaptic firing, otherwise known as the electrical transmission of information), sodium ions pass through sodium channels into the neural cell, depolarizing the cell, meaning the concentration of sodium ions and potassium ions inside the cell becomes reversed, flipping the charge of the neuron from negative to positive for a split-second while the information is transmitted. Brain cells have many different types of ion receptors and channels.

8.
Receptors are proteins that transmit particular types of information from the outside of a cell membrane to the inside. Protein receptors are triggered to transmit information whenever they come into contact with certain molecules, but they don't allow the molecules themselves to pass through the cell membrane, as opposed to protein channels, which are gates that allow certain molecules to pass through the cell membrane. Receptors activate certain signaling pathways within a cell, and sometimes they deactivate certain signaling pathways. Different molecules bind to different receptors. Agonists activate receptors. Antagonists block receptors.

Channels are proteins with pores that can open and close, creating passages in the cellular membrane. There is a particular voltage that triggers voltage-gated sodium channels to open, allowing sodium ions to flood into the neuron, flipping its charge from negative to positive, which then triggers the voltage-gated potassium channels to open, allowing potassium ions to

flood out for a moment before the membrane closes its pores and the cell equilibrates back to its resting state.

Ion channels can either heighten a neuron's action potential (making it more likely to fire off a bit of information), or inhibit the neuron's action potential. The former is called an excitatory action potential, and the latter is called an inhibitory action potential. Neurons compute information through numerous impulses competing to excite or inhibit action potentials.

9) A synapse is the transmission of information across synaptic clefts, i.e., gaps between the bouton of one neuron and the dendrite of another. Neurons speak to each other through synapses. Synaptic vesicles are small sacs filled with various neurotransmitters. During synapse, the contents of synaptic vesicles are sprayed across the synaptic cleft, transmitting information from the axonal bouton of one neuron to various dendrites on an adjacent neuron.

There are over a hundred types of neurotransmitters, each capable of manifesting a variety of different mental and physical effects.

10) Regions (networks) of the brain constrain information, isolating the information/influence of some regions from affecting other regions. During the dying brain process these barriers become permeable, welcoming the exchange of heretofore segregated information.

11) The world you experience is a model generated by the brain. Your world is generated by the way neurons are communicating with one another, but their informational generation and exchange system changes drastically during the dying brain process, resulting in a unique type of consciousness, a consciousness not bound by the efficient neural pathways you've evolved throughout your life, i.e., not bound by the normal experiential constraints of the linear and logical world. This might be the key to understanding out-of-body experiences and the deathbed phenomenon known as terminal lucidity, where certain neural pathways pertaining to memory become overloaded, circumventing the prior established pathways which for one reason or another (Alzheimer's, dementia, etcetera) have become inoperable/dysfunctional.

12) Waking-world data comes in through the senses and goes from low order interpretive networks to high order interpretive networks within the cortical columns of the brain, but dreamed information is generated differently. The dream world is not manifested through the process of turning raw data into meaningful information. The dream world is founded upon symbols and contexts already imbued with meaning.

13) Each one of us has evolved our own unique experience-generator. Each of us generates our own particular world. At any given moment, your world is synonymous with a complex pattern of cortical column activation.

14) Your brain continuously creates and revises your model of the environment and reality in general, somewhat like the refresh rate on a computer screen. Sensory information is continuously selecting/guiding the next state/model of the cortex.

15.
Classical Model of Perception and Cognition: The brain is in a particular state, then the brain receives new sensory information, and the new sensory information directs the next brain state.

Contemporary Model of Perception and Cognition: The prior brain state predicts/directs the next brain state, revising its model of the world only when new information conflicts with the preexisting model, i.e., the brain revises its model of the world based on incongruities with its prior model. Your brain is continuously reassessing the world to see if it still matches your prior model/expectations of reality, noting any differences that come into your field of awareness and adjusting the model accordingly.

It should be noted that the classical model of processing information is initiated whenever the model of reality doesn't match up with the sensory data being experienced/processed. Both models of constructing reality are in a constant feedback loop. The revision model of sensory processing is more efficient than the classical model of constantly world-building from the foundation on up.

16) When you dream, information stops coming from the outside world (for the most part) and the brain begins drawing from information stored within itself to recalibrate its version of reality, but it is still utilizing the same models it utilizes during wakeful consciousness.

17) The guidance for constructing reality in a dream (or dreamlike) state ceases to be input from the "outside" world, and switches to drawing experience from the "inside" world of ideas and beliefs, no longer constrained and calibrated by the linear stream of external sensory data.

18) Your current model of reality is the eidetic aftereffect of your prior model, only slightly modified by new input from one moment to the next.

19) Your brain is continuously trying to predict the next pattern of information it will receive. Ponder how this would work when the next pattern of information does not come from the "outer" world of facts, but instead is drawn from the "inner" world of beliefs. And remember, your brain revises its model of expectations regarding the world whenever its predictions start to fail.

20) Whether in a dream or during the dying brain process, once the senses completely disconnect from the outer world, the brain quickly accommodates to processing the experience of the inner world, and begins making predictions based upon inner world perceptions.

21) The dying brain process initiates changes on a cellular/molecular level, altering how cells transmit information as well as altering the types of information that may be transmitted, allowing each neural cell to communicate in more varied ways than usual. This drastic overall change will manifest a unique emergent property: the experience of the eidetic afterlife.

22) During anoxia, or oxygen deprivation, the brain releases a massive amount of glutamate. Glutamate is the primary excitatory neurotransmitter, promoting neural communication and memory formation.

23) The brain is flooded with serotonin during the dying process. Serotonin inhibits potassium ion channels when activating 5-HT2A receptors, increasing the likelihood of synaptic firing, or the exchange of information. This could explain "my whole life flashed before my eyes" as well as terminal lucidity, because there are alternate channels of information available to the altered consciousness of the dying brain, which is synapsing (exchanging information between neurons) at an incredibly higher rate than usual.

24) The 5-HT2A serotonin receptors are the same receptors responsible for manifesting the otherworldly effects of psychedelic substances. 5-HT2A receptors (coupled with glutamate) enable access to other modes of processing information, i.e., other modes of consciousness. It should be noted that dreaming is associated with a pair of muscarinic acetylcholine receptors: CHRM1 and CHRM3.

25) The stress/trauma of the dying process affects the brain at the subcellular level, with even miniscule transformations in molecular signaling pathways resulting in conspicuous psychospiritual effects.

26) Each change (no matter how tiny) in a ligand binding site molecule will affect the information passed along through its receptor, rerouting signaling pathways, which has a pronounced effect on the way we experience reality. Activating different signaling pathways within the same receptor will lead to different experiential effects.

27) There are procedural and molecular differences between a dream, a hallucination, a psychedelic drug experience, and the eidetic afterlife. **This rules out classifying near-death experiences and the eidetic afterlife as a mere hallucination or dream. The eidetic afterlife involves an altogether different form of consciousness!**

28) The eidetic afterlife is not a diminished or damaged state of consciousness. Our normal state of wakeful consciousness is optimal for fulfilling certain types of functions associated with survival, and the eidetic afterlife state is optimal for fulfilling other functions, such as dealing with the stress and trauma of dying. Both states of consciousness evolved their special roles throughout the eons.

29) All pathways of information become equally traversable during the dying brain process. This is key to understanding the phenomenon called terminal lucidity. Terminal lucidity consists of brief bouts of awareness in people with memory impairment (i.e., Alzheimer's, dementia, etcetera) that are nearing their time of death. It usually occurs hours before death, but sometimes it occurs days before death, and in rare cases it can happen weeks or even months before the full-blown dying brain process is initiated. Such episodes are likely due to minor

instances of hypoxia, when oxygen is restricted from the brain, which tends to trigger aspects of the dying brain process.

30) The deep pyramidal layer of the cortical column is associated with psychedelic experiences. The same layer is also associated with "the wave of death" (i.e., the hypersynaptic activity recorded during the dying brain process), which is believed to be an objective outward indication of the subjective inward experience of a phenomenon known as "total life recall". The term "total life recall" might be a bit of a stretch. Most likely it only *feels* like total life recall and consists of the "greatest hits" from your memory, regardless of whether those recollections are pleasant or disturbing.

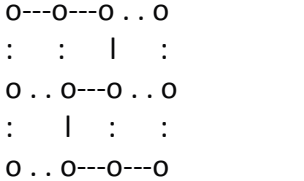
31) Question: How does depolarization (flipping the charge in a neural cell to allow the synaptic firing of a bit of information) lead to the psychedelic experience as well as the eidetic afterlife? Answer: Pyramidal neurons are connected to other pyramidal neurons in other cortical columns, allowing them to spread information in waves. Cortical columns evolve strong information pathways to other cortical columns throughout your lifetime. Cortical columns are also connected to other cortical columns by many weak information pathways, which rarely undergo synapse, except when you are dying. There is a mass depolarization of pyramidal neurons during the dying brain process, allowing regions of the brain to communicate with one another that don't normally do so. During the dying brain process, pyramidal neurons fire frantically through every synaptic connection, transmitting information through strong and weak pathways equally, creating an overload of varied experience signals. Every pattern of activation becomes equally possible. Think of the effect this would have on your consciousness.

32) During the dying brain process, your regular channels for processing/manifesting reality are overridden with random novel information, drastically altering your world model, which will drastically alter your experience of the world. Now add to this the fact that you are disconnected from the outside world which constantly recalibrates and directs your sense of being and reality.

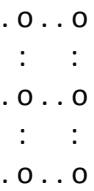
33) Observe these two (oversimplified) diagrams of a section of cortical columns, where:

o = a cortical column (as seen from above)
o---o = strong neural signaling pathway between cortical columns
o . . o = weak neural signaling pathway between cortical columns

Normal Brain Signaling Pathways (only certain time-tested pathways are favored, severely limiting the amount of available information)



Brain Signaling Pathways During the Dying Brain Process (all pathways are equally favored, exponentially increasing the amount of available information)



34) During the dying brain process, the synaptic resting potential of every neuron is raised closer to the action potential, making synapses more likely to occur. During the dying brain process, all neural signaling pathways are equally likely to fire, allowing new and unexpected expressions of information to register in our experience, as well as the recovery of memories that were heretofore inaccessible, which might explain terminal lucidity. Let's say a particular memory is associated with a certain pattern of neurosynaptic activation. Now let's say Alzheimer's has made that particular pattern of synaptic activation inaccessible. The heightened state of neurosynaptic activity brought about by the dying brain process allows alternate pathways of information exchange to access the heretofore inaccessible memory.

35) As new and unique world models (i.e., world models which are not congruent with our usual world models, such as the heavens and hells which might manifest during the dying brain process) begin to consistently register in our experience, our brain will quickly alter its predictions and expectations of what reality is in order to fit the new world model(s).

36) During depolarization, sodium ions flood into the neural cell and raise its synaptic threshold potential, making a synapse (i.e., an action potential) more likely to occur.

Strengthening a synapse increases the likelihood of an action potential occurring. Synapses are normally strengthened in two ways: 1) Increasing the number of synaptic connections increases the synaptic strength in a cumulative manner. 2) Increasing the number of receptors on a synaptic membrane increases the chance that a synaptic exchange of information will occur.

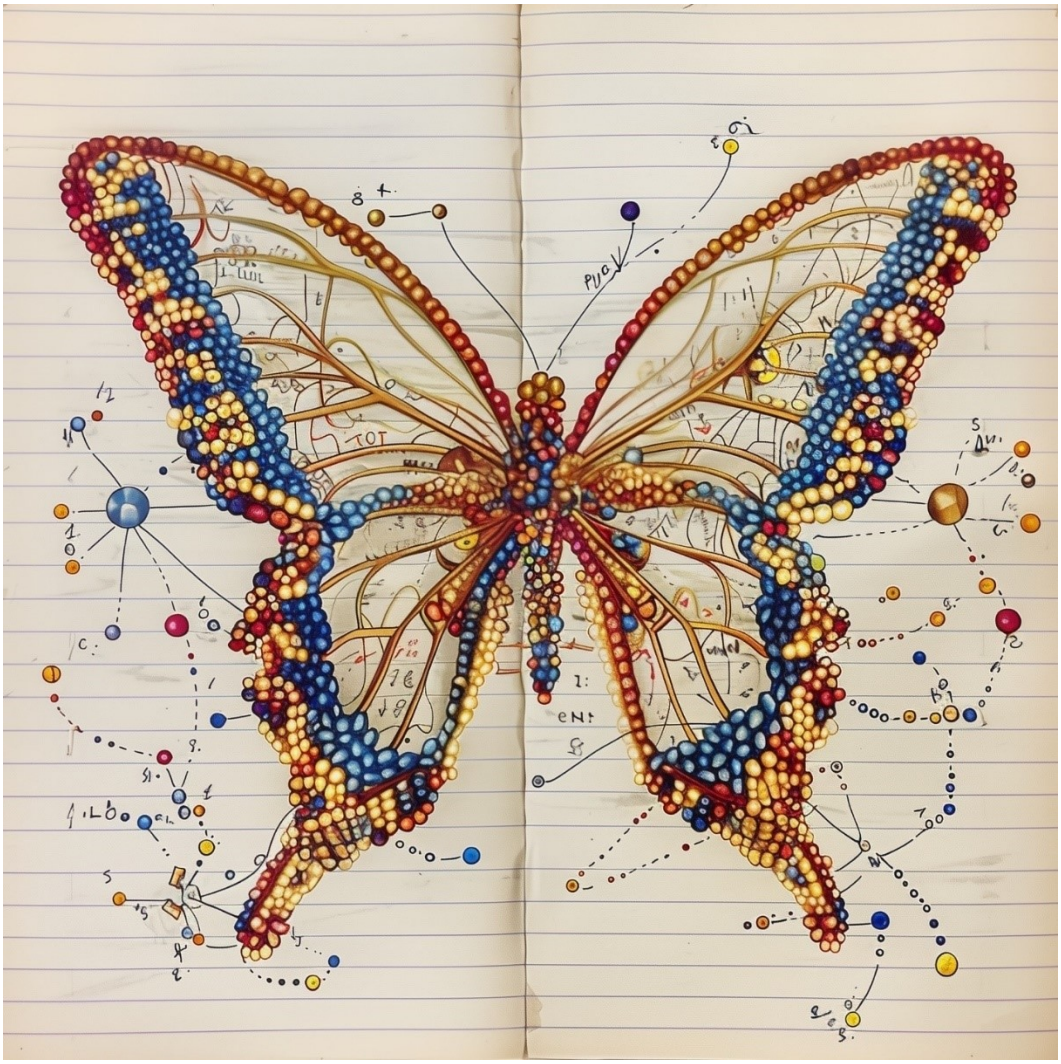
37) It should be noted that neuroscientists and philosophers still aren't sure how subcellular signaling molecules manifest our sensory experience of the world.

38) During the hyper-elongation of dream time that occurs during the dying brain process, the number of possible experiential states increases dramatically, flooding every moment with vastly more information than you have access to in your normal living state. This might explain why things seem more real and vivid in a near-death experience. Normally your brain is using the path of least resistance to create your model of reality, but in the heightened state of the dying brain process, you are experiencing things in a richer, more multifaceted manner.

Recap: During the dying brain process, you are processing significantly more information from moment to moment than you do in your normal waking state. If you are processing significantly more information, it's very likely you are experiencing more information as well.

39) Your default model of reality is actually your default model of yourself, your feeling of you-ness. If your default model of reality changes and expands, the experience of you likewise changes and expands.

40) The hypersynaptic neural activity observed during the dying brain process could be an explanation for out-of-body experiences. Strongly established cortical pathways of information normally locate and situate you in various ways within your environment, but once you are cut off from the outside world (as happens during dreams and the dying brain process), your sense of self becomes reliant on the environment of the inner world, which you yourself are creating unaware (except in rare cases of lucid dreaming). During the dying brain process, you are unwittingly located everywhere in the strange new world-model your brain is manifesting. Self and world are synonymous.



Notes Concerning Eternity, part ten:
A Psychopharmacological Explanation for the Manifestation of the Eidetic Afterlife During the Dying Brain Process

Let's explore the ingredients and properties of the neurochemical elixir that floods the brain with visions of paradise and perdition right before we die. During anoxia, or oxygen deprivation, the brain undergoes a series of changes, including a massive release of endorphins, adrenaline, noradrenaline, glutamate, serotonin, acetylcholine, dopamine, and very likely (according to the latest research) endogenous DMT!

A flood of **endorphins** are released during the dying brain process. Endorphins are an inhibitory type of neurotransmitter that lowers pain signals to the brain while elevating feelings of comfort and happiness. Endorphins are produced in the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus.

A flood of **adrenaline (epinephrine)** and **noradrenaline (norepinephrine)** is released during the dying brain process. Adrenaline and noradrenaline are both hormones and neurotransmitters, which means they are active in the bloodstream as well as the nervous system. Adrenaline and noradrenaline combined are responsible for your fight-or-flight response, increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Noradrenaline also increases alertness and focus. The surge of adrenaline and noradrenaline released during the dying brain process would result in heightened awareness and the ability to process information more rapidly than usual, contributing to the phenomenon known as “total life recall” or “life review”. Adrenaline is produced in the adrenal glands and the rostral ventrolateral medulla of the brainstem. Noradrenaline is produced in the adrenal glands and the locus coeruleus in the pons of the brainstem.

A flood of **glutamate** is released during the dying brain process. Glutamate has an excitatory effect on neurons, aiding in learning and remembering. This would explain why many people claim to gain insight from their near-death experience. Glutamate is produced in glial cells and neurons.

A flood of **serotonin** is released during the dying brain process. In addition to regulating appetite and sexual arousal, serotonin suppresses anxiety and increases feelings of wellbeing and happiness. Elevated serotonin levels can lead to altered states of consciousness, including visual and auditory hallucinations, which would explain the vivid imagery and spiritual peace reported by many people during near-death experiences. Did you know LSD, DMT, mescaline, and psilocybin all work their magic by activating 5-HT2A serotonin receptors? In fact, serotonin and psilocyn molecules are almost identical, possessing the same molecular composition and structure, except for the slightly different position of their oxygen binding sites. Approximately 90% of the body’s serotonin is synthesized in the enterochromaffin cells lining the gastrointestinal tract. The rest is produced in the raphe nuclei of the brainstem.

A flood of **acetylcholine** is released during the dying brain process. Acetylcholine is the primary neurotransmitter associated with dreaming and visual processing. Acetylcholine also plays a key role in neuroplasticity. According to the National Library of Medicine, neuroplasticity is defined as “the ability of the nervous system to change its activity in response to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli by reorganizing its structure, functions, or connections after injuries such as a stroke.” Acetylcholine’s power to induce the formation and rerouting of synaptic connections is crucial for learning new ideas and comprehending new experiences. It should be noted that elevated acetylcholine levels have been proven to enhance memory and increase the likelihood of lucid dreaming, facts which take on greater significance in light of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis. Acetylcholine is produced in the cholinergic neurons of the basal forebrain and the mesopontine tegmentum.

A flood of **dopamine** is released during the dying brain process. Dopamine is known as the “pleasure chemical” due to the feelings of joy and contentment it induces. Dopamine also increases the length and strength of dreams. Half of your supply of dopamine is produced in the brain (specifically in the substantia nigra, ventral tegmental area, and hypothalamus), and the

other half is produced in the gut (specifically in the gastrointestinal tract by enteric neurons and intestinal epithelial cells.

Researchers have conjectured that **endogenous DMT** (a powerful psychedelic compound) is released during the dying brain process. This would obviously result in an otherworldly experience. The effects of DMT mirror descriptions of near-death experiences, including transcendent feelings of oneness and encounters with divine entities. Research has proven DMT can be produced in the pineal gland of the mammalian brain. In 2019, experiments showed that a rat's brain is capable of synthesizing and releasing DMT*.

*Dean JG, Liu T, Huff S, Sheler B, Barker SA, Strassman RJ, et al. (June 2019). "Biosynthesis and Extracellular Concentrations of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) in the Mammalian Brain". *Scientific Reports*. 9 (1): 9333.

Now take a moment to ponder the combined effect of all these neurotransmitters flooding your brain simultaneously. This neurochemical concoction constitutes one of four factors that contribute to the eidetic afterlife experience, the other three being restriction of oxygen to the brain (which elongates the experience of the passage of time and commonly results in a specific type of hallucination—perhaps we should call it an otherworldly vision—that involves seeing a bright light at the end of a tunnel), massive surges of neurosynaptic excitation associated with memory retrieval and decision-making (which would arguably result in the experience of a "life review"), and the shutdown of various centers of the brain responsible for our sense of the passage of time (further altering our experience of the passage of time). The eidetic afterlife is certainly no mere dream or hallucination. Accessing the eidetic afterlife involves a radically different form of consciousness which employs different neurotransmitters and subcellular processes than dreams and hallucinations.

What shall we call this potent neurochemical potion? I've heard some refer to it as the death cocktail, but this doesn't sound right to me. Death cocktail sounds negative and poisonous, as if the concoction itself is killing you. I prefer to call it something positive like "the elixir of eternity" or "the elixir of immortality" or simply "the elixir of eidos", which sounds like something magical, as if the concoction is freeing your mind from your body.

Henceforth, the concentrated cocktail of neurochemicals (endorphins, adrenaline, noradrenaline, serotonin, dopamine, acetylcholine, glutamate, and endogenous DMT, among others) released in abundance during the dying brain process shall simply be referred to as "eidos". Eidos is the biochemical chain reaction that results in feelings of bliss and visions of the hereafter.

LSD duration: 8 to 12 hours
Psilocybin duration: 4 to 6 hours
DMT duration: 10 to 15 minutes
Eidos duration: anywhere from a few seconds up to several minutes, although the subjective experience will feel significantly longer, maybe even infinitely longer!

Notes Concerning Eternity, part eleven:
Oh, the Places You'll Go and the People You'll Meet!

[1] Whether or not you believe in heaven or any other version of the afterlife, near-death experiences themselves are real, despite the abundance of hokey-sounding stories you'll find on social media. Why is it that a Christian who has a near-death experience can expect to see Jesus or an angel, while a Viking who has a near-death experience can expect to see Odin or a Valkyrie? Are they having the same experience, but interpreting it differently? Not according to the Christian. Near-death experiences differ between people and cultures, yet they often share the scenario of meeting a Compassionate Savior Mechanism (in the vernacular of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis). The embodiment of the Compassionate Savior Mechanism will obviously differ from person to person and culture to culture. Your imagination can only draw upon the extent of your life experience.

[2] In 1975, Vasudev Pandey had a near-death experience in which he claimed to have been dragged by two nondescript beings to a dried-up garden and brought before a dreadful man of immense proportions who was naked with coal black skin and carrying a club. Vasudev presumed the dreadful man to be Yamraj, the Hindu god of the dead. It should be noted that Vasudev's mother was a pious Hindu who read scriptures to him all throughout his childhood, including scriptures which described Yamraj.

https://med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies/wp-content/uploads/sites/360/2017/01/STE22NDEs-in-India.pdf?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR2CqO9Nsb3RY-BHl7_5uoYrEnn5LgzXr0xKMyu9ggbqn3-Tuk-cbcFloQc_aem_GiXvIy02ce6Dwg-6DqWgeg

[3] Monotheistic religions are ill-suited to explain the varying accounts of near-death experiences. New Age spiritualists argue that near-death experiences involving Jesus, Odin, Yamraj, or any other deity are merely different mortal interpretations of the same divine source. But there is an altogether different lens through which to interpret this phenomenon, namely the eidetic afterlife hypothesis.

[4] Researching near-death experiences, William J. Serdahely came across a case where a ten-year-old girl encountered a favorite toy in disguise during her near-death experience. Describing her experience, the girl said she was peaceful and relaxed. She remembered seeing a whitish blue light at the end of a tunnel, and the shadow of a dog. Lights at the end of tunnels and shadowy black hounds are common encounters in near-death experiences and afterlife lore, but the girl also claims to have met a white lamb that was loving and gentle, which led her back to her body. Her parents divulged that her favorite toy at age two was a stuffed white lamb that doubled as a music box.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/15173465_Near_death_experiences_and_death-related_visions_in_children_Implications_for_the_clinician?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0qDyFYFZ7jA4SpIV9rz2pkF_D5Yq_GVbleTVnD4Fsxar7Fs4U3dNXmwSY_aem_xuZvPHNZSxDQ6n9DrN7cHw

[5] The research of Melvin Morse and Karl Jansen (carried out independently of each other) has revealed that it's not uncommon for a child's near-death experience to involve friends and family who are still alive, school teachers, videogame characters, comic book characters, and cartoon characters repurposed for the role of psychopomp. This makes perfect sense according to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, where anything (whether real or not) that is seen as a source of comfort is a likely candidate to act as a Compassionate Savior Mechanism during a near-death experience.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twelve:
Spelunking Down the Rabbit Hole

We're about to dive deep down the rabbit hole, exploring a few of the stranger implications of the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis.

[1] My friend Steve came by to visit me the other day, and he voiced a concern I've heard before in relation to the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis. "Aren't you worried about immoral people using the hypothesis to condone their immoral ways? Doesn't this give bad guys a 'get out of jail free' card? If a Nazi truly believes genocide is necessary for the greater good of the master race, won't that mean they'll be rewarded in the eidetic afterlife for their inhumanity?"

[2] Let's say you're a Nazi in 1942. You live in Berlin and you believe in a certain ideology (survival of the fittest) which you believe allows you to conquer and exploit other people. However, through the news and other forms of media you are well aware that much of the

world disagrees with your belief system. Even though you have convinced your conscious self of the “truth” of your stance, your subconscious takes all sides into account, giving everything equal measure, or even worse, favoring information that disturbs you (i.e., information that conflicts with your self-image and worldview). You have various ego-defense mechanisms at work to suppress the guilt and shame attendant with your daily behavior, but no stratagem or rhetoric from the waking world will aid you during the final dream of eternity. You will stand naked in judgment before yourself.

[3] Now let’s say you’re a Viking raider living sometime in the 9th century. You believe in a certain ideology (survival of the fittest) which you believe allows you to conquer and exploit other people. Everyone in your world shares the same belief system, except the indecipherable foreigners you occasionally attempt to conquer and exploit. Since there aren’t any alternative viewpoints vying to influence you, your subconscious takes the notion of “survival of the fittest” as the foundation of its interpretive lens. Therefore, no amount of bloodshed or pillaging will unsettle your hereafter.

[4] Could someone in the 21st century spend their life worshipping Zeus in hopes of spending their afterlife in Elysium? Sure they could, but I doubt it would work. Once the afterlife of a religion passes into a thing of myth, I’m not sure it’s capable of being revived and truly believed in, at least in the manner that would cause it to manifest during the final dream of eternity. Even if you could train your conscious self to believe in the reality of the ancient Greek pantheon, your subconscious will always be receiving information from your surroundings that clearly states otherwise. It would take some powerful hypnosis to actually believe the cosmos nowadays is controlled by a bearded horndog who flings lightning bolts, but in 700 B.C.E. you wouldn’t have thought twice about it. On a related note, how would all those cartoons you watched as a child (and very possibly as an adult) factor into your portrayal of mythical Elysium? It’s all there still, inside you, waiting to be released. Whatever Elysium or Valhalla means to us today is not the same as whatever they meant in their heyday. They’re different places now, different experiences. They’ve been modernized along with everything else. Capitalism has transformed the landscapes of our afterlives.

[5] I imagine many nonspiritual office workers end up in a secular afterlife, a bland sort of liminal space, modern-day limbo, neither heavenly nor overly hellish, just monotonous. The idea that one’s job might play at least a partial role in their afterlife is somewhat disturbing. What are you willing to sacrifice for your career? Maybe my dear old quilt-making granny (for whom religion was more of a habit than a belief) ended up in some sort of Rockwelllian or Kinkade-like pastiche. And who knows what watching approximately 80,000 hours of televised programming throughout your lifetime (according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) will do to the flavor of your afterlife.

[6] After a lifetime of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll, will the band members of Mötley Crüe end up in a heavy metal hell of eternal orgies? Or would that be considered a heaven? One soul’s heaven is another soul’s hell.

[7] Every afterlife is someone's lifelong work of art.

[8] Given the mechanics of the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis, it would make sense to assume that afterlife experiences have evolved throughout the last 300,000 years (ever since the appearance of *Homo sapiens*, and very likely much longer). We can take the oral accounts of nonliterate cultures from all over the world as representative of more ancient conceptions of the hereafter. These conceptions are neither garishly paradisiacal nor insidiously hellish. They're merely extensions of one's daily routine, albeit under optimal conditions, such as an abundance of game for hunters, or simply foraging on a warm sunny day if one's whole life was spent in harsh arctic climes. As we moved our focal point of awe from animistic embodiments of the world to superpowered projections of ourselves from beyond, our conception of the afterlife changed accordingly.

[9] Here's a comforting thought: If the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis is correct, you will most likely be reunited with your loved ones, including any dearly departed pets.

[10] I've been speaking as if these afterlife scenarios are steady clear-cut events, but more likely the final dream of eternity is a roiling chaos of experiences, though each person has their own range based on the life they lived. In the end, you don't get a choice, but all your life you were free to choose what the end could draw upon. What did you fill your mind with? What did you feed your soul?

Notes Concerning Eternity, part thirteen:
The Psychophysiology of Out-of-Body Experiences

1. An out-of-body experience (or OBE) is the experience that one's consciousness has somehow separated from one's body. The experience may be of floating somewhere near one's body as a ghostlike reflection of oneself, or the experience may be of oneself becoming a perceptual field bereft of any form or clear boundary.

2. Let me make this perfectly clear, **OBEs are real**. However, the notion that an OBE involves your spirit leaving your physical body is questionable. To truly answer the question of whether a spirit is capable of leaving its shell, you would first have to explain what "spirit" is, and you would also have to explain what "matter" is, which gets very tricky when you get down to the subatomic level of reality. Bottom line, OBEs are physically traceable neuropsychological events.

3. There are countless people who claim to have left their bodies during an OBE, but there is a high probability they are unwittingly deceiving themselves about the source of their OBE perceptions. **What's the use of all this perceptual-interface biotechnology (eyes, ears, noses, taste buds, nerve cells) if it's totally unnecessary for the act of perceiving?**

4. Are OBEs hallucinations? This question is trickier than it seems. All consciousness involves hallucination to a certain degree, hallucination here meaning the mental filtering and processing of one thing (raw perceptual data) into another thing (meaningful information). At any given moment, we are never experiencing the objective world; we only perceive the information gathered by our senses *and our imagination*. The term "psychedelic" literally means "mind-manifesting" or "mind-revealing". In this sense, all matter and perceptible energy is psychedelic.

5. Perception involves directly experiencing the world through our senses, while imagination is the mental creation of experiences and ideas, often without direct sensory input. Perception relies on sensory information, like seeing a red apple or smelling a fragrant rose, whereas imagination allows us to visualize a scene or create a story based on our memories and ideas.

Question: How can you sense something in the outer world without the use of your outer-world senses? Without your outer-world senses, you are limited to experiencing your memories and imagination (memory is actually an extension of imagination). But your imagination is more powerful than you realize. In fact, the word *imagination* doesn't do justice to the miraculous magic it attempts to encapsulate. It should be called *the capacity to create worlds and transform reality,* or something equally grandiose. What makes you think your imagination can't simulate the surroundings of an OBE with near-perfect accuracy, factoring in information such as the sound of an ambulance coming to aid you, or the scent of someone drawing near you to check your pulse for signs of life, or the coldness of the operating table just before the anesthesia kicked in, or faintly discerned conversations between the surgeon and nurse as they try to resuscitate you? Before you tell me that anesthesia blocks access to all conscious sensory data, I would rather entertain the thought that anesthesia doesn't block out all sensory data in all cases than jump to the conclusion that we have identities which can perceive bodily sensations (such as sight and sound) without the medium of bodies.

6.
Magnetism seems supernatural without a rudimentary understanding of physics.

Eclipses seem mystical without a rudimentary understanding of astronomy.

Procreation seems miraculous without a rudimentary understanding of biology.

And out-of-body experiences seem spiritual without a rudimentary understanding of neurophysiology.

7. Does part of you (your intellect) leave your body during an out-of-body experience? In order to properly answer this question, we need to determine what the limit of "you" is. Is your body the limit of you? Aren't your perceptions an integral part of what makes you *you*? Aren't you your perceptions, coupled with memories and ideas about your perceptions? You are a field of awareness emanating from a body. The field of awareness is not located in the body, though it may focus its attention on inward physical processes.

8. It should be clearly stated that **no OBE story of a person in a disembodied state claiming to see a shoe on a roof or a coin on top of a cabinet has ever been objectively verified, not a single one.**

9. Neurotheology is the study of how religious practices affect the brain, and vice versa. Neurotheologists attempt to correlate objective neural activities with subjective spiritual experiences. The term was first introduced in Aldous Huxley's utopian manifesto titled *Island* (1962).

10. At the beginning of the 21st century, neuroscientist Andrew B. Newberg discovered that "intensely focused spiritual contemplation triggers an alteration in the activity of the brain that leads one to perceive transcendent religious experiences as solid, tangible reality. In other words, the sensation that Buddhists call *oneness with the universe*." According to Newberg, "If you block sensory inputs to [the orientation association area situated at the posterior of the parietal lobe], as you do during the intense concentration of meditation, you prevent the brain from forming the distinction between self and not-self." Once information ceases to arrive from the senses, the boundary between self and the world dissolve, and the brain has no choice but to "perceive the self as endless and intimately interwoven with everyone and everything." Elsewhere he states, "The [right parietal association cortex], equally bereft of sensory data, defaults to a feeling of infinite space. The meditators feel that they have touched infinity."

Newberg, Andrew B.*;* D'Aquili, Eugene G.*;* Rause, Vince (2002). *Why God Won't Go Away. Brain Science and the Biology of Belief.* New York City: Ballantine Books. ISBN 978-0-345-44034-1.

Begley, Sharon (6 May 2001). "Religion and the Brain". *Newsweek*. New York City: Newsweek Media Group.

11. **A Brief Timeline of OBE Research**

1887: Charles Richet declared OBEs are created through memory and imagination, and are a type of dream.

1912: James H. Hyslop suggested OBEs are an attempt of the subconscious mind to place the subject in a different physical location, possibly due to danger or extreme stress. Later psychologists (Nandor Fodor in 1959 and Jan Ehrenwald in 1974) also proposed that OBEs are a psychophysiological defense mechanism designed to deal with the threat of death.

1943: The term *out-of-body experience* was coined in 1943 by G.N.M. Tyrell.

1968: Celia Green conducted the first large-scale study of OBEs, querying 400 subjects. She proposed the term “metachoric experience” to denote a semi-conscious state wherein a person’s entire field of perception is replaced with a hallucination that incorporates perceived elements from the real world.

1977: Carl Sagan suggested OBEs (and NDEs) might involve fantasies of reliving the birth process.

1978: Susan Blackmore came to the conclusion that an OBE occurs when a person loses contact with sensory input from the outside world while remaining conscious. The person retains the illusion of having a body, but their perceptions are no longer derived from the senses.

1985: Stephen Laberge associated OBEs with lucid dreaming.

1985: Harvey Irwin explained OBEs as involving attentional cognitive processes and somatic sensory activity, classifying OBEs as a type of psychological absorption, which is the phenomenon of becoming perceptually absorbed in one’s fantasy, so that one’s fantasy is experienced as real. Irwin provided examples of OBEs as **autoscopy** (perceiving the surrounding environment from a position outside of one’s own body) and **depersonalization** (the feeling of being detached from oneself, manifesting as a sense of disconnection from one's own thoughts, emotions, sensations, or actions; often accompanied by a feeling of observing oneself from an external perspective).

1989: David Hufford linked OBEs with waking nightmares and sleep paralysis.

2003: Terence Hines claimed OBEs can be generated by artificial stimulation of the brain, suggesting OBEs result from "temporary, minor brain malfunctions, not by the person's spirit actually leaving the body."

2007: Jan Ehrenwald suggested OBEs result from a delusional need to assure ourselves we possess a soul which will continue beyond the death of our body.

2011: A study by Jason Braithwaite and colleagues correlated OBEs with neural instabilities in the brain’s temporal lobes, disrupting the body’s self-perception.

2022: Josef Parvizi demonstrated that stimulating the anterior part of the precuneus with electrical currents can induce an OBE.

2025: J. Martin Strangeweather suggested that full-blown OBEs are a result of overstimulation of the temporoparietal junction during the hypersynaptic phase of the dying brain process, coupled with the neurochemical flood of endorphins, adrenaline, noradrenaline, serotonin, dopamine, acetylcholine, glutamate, and possibly endogenous DMT released in the brain while

dying, not to mention the dissociative psychological effect brought on by the extreme stress of facing one's imminent demise.

12. Research by Olaf Blanke proved it is possible to reliably elicit OBEs by electrically stimulating the right temporoparietal junction of the brain. His research also provided definitive proof that the experience of consciousness and body coexisting in the same location depends on multisensory integration in the temporoparietal junction.

Blanke O, Mohr C, Michel CM, Pascual-Leone A, Brugger P, Seeck M, Landis T, Thut G (2005). "Linking out-of-body experience and self-processing to mental own-body imagery at the temporoparietal junction". *Journal of Neuroscience*. 25 (3): 550–557

"A critical discovery was made by a Swiss neurosurgeon, Olaf Blanke, when he was stimulating an epileptic woman's brain with subdural electrodes, trying to find the epileptic focus. To his and her surprise, he found that when he stimulated a spot at the right temporoparietal junction with very low intensity stimulation, this produced bodily distortions – a sense of floating, drifting, getting longer or shorter, thinner or fatter. Then when he applied a stronger stimulus, it produced full blown out-of-body experiences. He could even control the experiences."
—British Researcher of Consciousness Susan Blackmore

13. In 2007, Olaf Blanke and colleagues demonstrated that conflicting visual and tactile stimuli can disrupt the sense of spatial unity between the self and the body. Using virtual reality technology to view their own body from behind, participants would begin to feel as if the virtual body they saw in front of them was their own.

Lenggenhager, Bigna; Tadi, Tej; Metzinger, Thomas; Blanke, Olaf (2007). "Video Ergo Sum: Manipulating Bodily Self-Consciousness". *Science*. 317 (5841): 1096–1099.

14. During the 1970s, Karlis Osis conducted numerous OBE experiments with psychic Alex Tanous. In one series of experiments, Tanous was asked to identify the color of targets (choosing between two colors) placed at distant locations while in an OBE state. Osis reported 114 correct identifications out of 197 trials. However, the experimental controls were criticized, and according to researcher Susan Blackmore, the results were not statistically significant, as 108 correct guesses would be expected by chance alone. Blackmore concluded that the findings offered "no evidence for accurate perception in the OBE."

15. In 2014, a functional imaging study reported the case of a woman who could induce OBEs at will. She reported developing the ability as a child and associated it with difficulties in falling asleep. She reported looking down on herself from above. The participant did not link the OBEs to religious experiences. Her functional imaging data revealed brain function changes associated with her OBEs were different than those observed in motor imagery. Activations were mainly left-sided and involved the left supplementary motor area and supramarginal and posterior superior temporal gyri, the last two overlapping with the temporal parietal junction commonly associated with OBEs. The cerebellum also showed activation consistent with the

participant's report of the impression of movement during the OBE. There was also left middle frontal gyrus and superior orbital frontal gyrus activity, regions often associated with action monitoring.

16. **Debunking the Tart Experiment**

In 1968, Charles Tart conducted an OBE experiment with a subject known as Miss Z for four nights in his sleep laboratory. Miss Z was attached to an EEG machine and a five-digit number on a piece of paper was placed on a shelf above her bed. She did not claim to see the number on the first three nights, but on the fourth night she gave the number correctly: 25132. The odds of guessing a 5-digit number are 100,000 to 1.

During the experiment, Tart monitored the equipment in the next room, behind an observation window, however, he admitted he had occasionally fallen asleep during the night. Psychologists Leonard Zusne and Warren Jones claim the possibility of the subject having obtained the number through ordinary sensory means was not ruled out during the experiment. For example, the subject was not constantly observed, and it was also suggested she may have read the number when she was being attached to the EEG machine. According to the magician Milbourne Christopher, "If she had held a mirror with a handle in her right hand, by tilting the mirror and looking up she could have seen a reflection of the paper on the shelf... The woman had not been searched prior to the experiment, nor had an observer been in the sleep chamber with her — precautions that should have been taken." In the words of Tart himself, “[Miss Z] might have concealed a mirror and telescoping rod in her pajamas and peeked at the shelf when she thought I might not be looking through the observation window.”

Milbourne Christopher. (1979). *Search For The Soul: An Insider’s Report On The Continuing Quest By Psychics and Scientists For Evidence Of Life After Death*. Crowell. pp. 90-91.

The psychologist James Alcock criticized the experiment for inadequate controls, questioning why the subject was not visually monitored by a video camera. Martin Gardner has suggested that while Tart was "snoring behind the window, Miss Z simply stood up in bed, without detaching the electrodes, and peeked.” Susan Blackmore wrote: "If Miss Z had tried to climb up, the brainwave record would have showed a pattern of interference. And that’s exactly what it did show."

Susan Blackmore. (1986). *The Adventures of a Parapsychologist*. Prometheus Books. p. 176.

17. **Debunking the Tennis Shoe Argument**

In 1977, a patient from Harborview Medical Center known as Maria claimed to have had an out-of-body experience. Maria said that during her OBE she floated above her body and flew outside the hospital. Maria later told her social worker Kimberly Clark that during the OBE she observed a tennis shoe on the third floor window ledge to the north side of the building. Clark went to the north wing of the building to corroborate Maria’s claim, and by looking out of a

window, she could see a tennis shoe on one of the ledges. Clark published the account in 1984. The story has since been used in many paranormal books and articles as evidence a spirit can leave the body. But there's more to this tale…

Clark, Kimberly (1984). "Clinical Interventions with Near-Death Experiencers". In Greyson, Bruce; Flynn, Charles P. (eds.). *The Near-Death Experience: Problems, Prospects, Perspectives.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers. pp. 242–255. ISBN 978-0-398-05008-5.

In 1996, Hayden Ebbern, Sean Mulligan and Barry Beyerstein visited the Medical Center to investigate Kimberly Clark's story. They placed a tennis shoe on the same ledge and saw that it was visible from within the building and could easily have been observed by a patient lying in bed. They also discovered that the tennis shoe was easy to observe from outside the building and suggested that Maria may have overheard a comment about it during her three days in the hospital and then incorporated it into her OBE. She also may have noticed it upon leaving the hospital and later misremembered the order of events, or outright lied about them. Ebbern, Mulligan, and Beyerstein concluded "Maria's story merely reveals the naiveté and the power of wishful thinking" that is so common among researchers eager to find paranormal explanations for OBEs. Casting even more doubt on the story, Clark did not publish the description of the case until seven years after it happened.

Ebbern, Hayden; Mulligan, Sean; Beyerstein, Barry (July–August 1996). "Maria's Near-Death Experience: Waiting for the Other Shoe to Drop" (PDF). *Skeptical Inquirer*. 20 (4): 27–33. Archived (PDF) from the original on September 26, 2020.

18. Oftentimes OBEs are "remembered" many years after their supposed occurrence, calling their veracity into question. The conscious waking mind is known to take random scraps of subconscious imagery and piece together narratives as best as it can from such, **completely unaware it is engaging in any such fabricating**.

19. In 2001, Sam Parnia and colleagues investigated OBE claims by placing figures on suspended boards facing the ceiling, not visible from the floor. According to Parnia, "Anybody who claimed to have left their body and be near the ceiling during resuscitation attempts would be expected to identify those targets. If, however, such perceptions are psychological, then one would obviously not expect the targets to be identified." The year-long investigation consisted of 63 cardiac arrest survivors, 7 of whom had memories of the time they were unconscious, and 4 of whom had near-death experiences (according to the investigation's criteria for such phenomena). The philosopher Keith Augustine later confirmed that all OBE target identification experiments in Parnia's investigation produced negative results.

Augustine, Keith (2019). "Near-Death Experiences are Not Evidence for Either Theism or Atheism" (PDF). *Theism and Atheism: Opposing Arguments in Philosophy*. Macmillan Reference USA. pp. 594–596.

20. In 2008, twenty-five U.K. and U.S. hospitals began participation in a large-scale OBE study coordinated by Sam Parnia and Southampton University, known as the AWARE study. As part of the study, Parnia placed hidden targets on shelves that could only be seen from above. According to Parnia, "if no one sees the pictures, it shows these experiences are illusions or false memories". In 2014 Parnia issued a statement indicating the first phase of the project was complete. No subjects saw any of the images that were mounted out of sight. Only 9% of the participants had NDEs, and only 2% reported hearing and seeing events in an OBE. In the words of parapsychologist Caroline Watt, “The one 'verifiable period of conscious awareness' that Parnia was able to report did not relate to this objective test. Rather, it was a patient giving a supposedly accurate report of events during his resuscitation. He didn't identify the pictures, he described the defibrillator machine noise. But that's not very impressive since many people know what goes on in an emergency room setting from seeing recreations on television." Also, we cannot rule out the possibility that the patient received a slight bit of perceptual data while he was clinically dead from cardiac arrest (which is very different than being biologically dead), and his imagination filled in the gaps.

"One not too impressive study does not prove life after death". *Doubtful News*. October 7, 2014.

21. In 2006, Shahar Arzy and colleagues demonstrated that self-location and body recognition involve two posterior brain regions: the **temporoparietal junction (TPJ)** is involved in spatially situating oneself within one’s environment; and the **extrastriate body area (EBA)** is involved in spatially situating oneself within one’s body. Mentally embodied self-location mainly involves the extrastriate body area (EBA), whereas disembodied self-location mainly involves the temporoparietal junction (TPJ).

Arzy, S.; Thut, G.; Mohr, C.; Michel, C.M.; Blanke, O. (2006). "Neural basis of embodiment: Distinct contributions of temporoparietal junction and extrastriate body area". *Journal of Neuroscience*. 26 (31): 8074–8081.

22. **Proven causes of out-of-body experiences:**

A) Hallucinogens such as psilocybin, mescaline, ketamine, DMT, MDA, and LSD, all of which drastically alter the information signals in the precuneus.

B) Falling asleep without losing waking lucidity, i.e., lucid dreaming, often accompanied by sleep paralysis.

C) Brainwave synchronization through audio and visual stimulation, such as binaural beats and sinusoidal wave pulses.

D) Direct stimulation of the vestibular cortex.

E) Electrical stimulation of the temporoparietal junction.

F) Sensory deprivation using such methods as flotation tanks and pink noise.

G) Sensory overload under torturous or extremely terrifying conditions.

H) Drowning.

I) Suffering cardiac arrest or undergoing major surgery.

J) Strong g-forces and falling from great heights.

K) Using a head-mounted VR display to confuse the sense of proprioception (the perception of the position and movement of one's own body).

L) Magnetic stimulation of the temporal lobe through the use of such devices as the God Helmet developed by Stanley Koren and Michael Persinger. Although certain effects have been produced, critics are skeptical of the efficacy of this device to induce full out-of-body experiences.

M) Galantamine (a substance that elevates acetylcholine levels in the brain, thereby augmenting memory and attention) used in conjunction with techniques to induce lucid dreaming.

23. One in ten people has an OBE at least once in their life.

"First Out-of-body Experience Induced In Laboratory Setting". *ScienceDaily*. August 24, 2007.

24. OBE data presented at the First International Forum of Consciousness Research in 1999: 85% of the 1,185 respondents claimed to have had between two and ten OBEs. 5.5% claimed to have had more than 100 such experiences. 45% claimed to have successfully induced at least one OBE by using a specific OBE-inducing technique. 62% claimed to experience non-physical flight. 40% claimed to see their own body while floating outside of it. 38% claimed to have passed through solid objects such as walls.

25. NDE researcher Pim van Lommel conjectures that the continuance of consciousness after death may be possible if the brain acts as a receiver of memories and consciousness from somewhere beyond and independent of the brain, like a radio picks up radio waves. But if the radio is broken, there is no longer any channel to pick up the information, in other words, even if consciousness exists outside the brain, perceptions can only be meaningfully perceived through the senses, otherwise what's the use of eyes and ears and noses and tongues and whatnot?

26. A recent argument in favor of disembodied OBEs claims that consciousness is an extraphysical force located outside the brain, further claiming that our brains must filter away

most of this universal consciousness in order to achieve our individualized perspectives. In a way this is correct, but not the way these theorists think it is. Consciousness is information, which is both "outside" the brain (as information to be accessed), and "inside" the brain (as processors of information). Consciousness is a constant feedback loop of information. NDEs don't arise from information filters in the dying brain turning off—NDEs arise from oxygen-deprived neurons in the dying brain going into a hyper-functional mode of accessing and processing information.

Neural filters deactivating during the dying process is a speculative concept. Neurons going into a hyperactive mode of processing information during the dying brain process is a recorded and demonstrable fact. This might also explain "terminal lucidity". Again, this altered state of consciousness has nothing to do with information filters shutting down and allowing more raw data to slip through; it has everything to do with hyper-functioning neurons finding alternate routes to process larger and more varied amounts of information!

27. The process of accessing the eidetic afterlife destroys brain cells, similar to how some spiritualists believe that looking directly at the face of God will blind you or drive you insane. Once the heightened state of consciousness necessary to access the eidetic afterlife is fully activated, there is no going back.

28. Remote viewing or other paranormal experiences do not necessarily prove the occurrence of disembodied or spiritual OBEs. The human mind is a transtemporal field of awareness, transtemporal in the sense that human imagination has the power to re-experience/recreate the past (in the form of memories) as well as project/predict hypothetical experiences regarding the future.

29. Accounts of near-death experiences often describe a feeling of letting go of the body, and indeed the dying process is a letting go of one's "outer world" bodily connection/association/awareness, and entering fully into the experience of memory mutated by imagination fueled by exotic psychoactive substances and stretched to its utmost limits.

30. The world you experience is a model generated by the brain. Your world is generated by the way neurons are communicating with one another, but their informational generation and exchange system changes drastically during the dying brain process, resulting in a unique type of consciousness, a consciousness not bound by the efficient neural pathways you've evolved throughout your life, i.e., not bound by the normal experiential constraints of the linear and logical world.

31. Regions (networks) of the brain constrain information, isolating the information/influence of some regions from affecting other regions. During the dying brain process these barriers become permeable, welcoming the exchange of heretofore segregated information. Perhaps the more holistic integration of right and left brain regions leads to a larger, more holistic awareness/interpretation of your locale.

32. During an OBE, information stops coming from the outside world (for the most part) and the brain begins drawing from information stored within itself to recalibrate its version of reality, but it is still utilizing the same models it utilizes during wakeful consciousness, much like when you dream. The blueprint for constructing reality in a dream (or dreamlike) state ceases to be input from the "outside" world, and switches to drawing experience from the "inside" world of ideas and beliefs, no longer constrained and calibrated by external sensory data.

33. Your current model of reality is the eidetic aftereffect of your prior model, only slightly modified by new input from one moment to the next. Your brain is continuously trying to predict the next pattern of information it will receive. Ponder how this would work when the next pattern of information does not come from the "outer" world of facts, but instead is drawn from the "inner" world of beliefs. And remember, your brain revises its model of expectations regarding the world whenever its predictions start to fail.

34. Whether in a dream, hallucination, or OBE, once the senses completely disconnect from the outer world, the brain quickly accommodates to processing the experience of the inner world, and begins making predictions based upon inner world perceptions.

35. During the dying brain process, your regular channels for processing/manifesting reality are overridden with random novel information, drastically altering your world model, which will drastically alter your experience of the world. Now add to this the fact that you are disconnected from the outside world which constantly recalibrates and directs your sense of being and reality.

36. The hypersynaptic neural activity observed during the dying brain process could be an explanation for out-of-body experiences. Strongly established cortical pathways of information normally locate and situate you in various ways within your environment, but once you are cut off from the outside world (as happens during dreams and the dying brain process), your sense of self becomes reliant on the environment of the inner world, which you yourself are creating unaware (except in rare cases of lucid dreaming). During the dying brain process, you are unwittingly located everywhere in the strange new world-model your brain is manifesting. Self and world are synonymous.

37. Our normal state of wakeful consciousness is optimal for fulfilling certain types of functions associated with survival, and the eidetic afterlife state is optimal for fulfilling other functions, such as dealing with the pain, stress, and trauma of dying. Both states of consciousness evolved their special roles throughout the eons. Perhaps removing ourselves altogether from the source of anxiety (our dying body) is the most effective coping strategy for facing death.

38. Why shouldn't altering the functionality of a specific part of the brain responsible for locating us within our environment, coupled with the effects of neurochemical augmentation to our memory and imagination (not to mention neurocellular transformations leading to an increased capacity to process information in varied ways), result in an experience identical to that which is labeled as an "out-of-body" experience?

In conclusion, we have no proof whatsoever that OBEs involve a spirit leaving the trappings of its physical body. We do however have ample evidence that OBEs are attributable to a variety of traceable neuropsychological alterations and impairments, whether induced by natural or artificial means.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part fourteen:
Organic Morality

1)
Heaven is not out there somewhere. Our afterlife hides within each one of us, and through the "perfect storm" of oxygen deprivation, neurosynaptic overload, the bombardment of various neurochemicals, and the shutdown of certain regions of the brain responsible for our sense of duration and time, eternity is conjured in the moments preceding death as opposed to afterward. This is a working hypothesis, not a religion. While the hypothesis attempts to sidestep the debate between atheism, agnosticism, and theism, its transformative effect on each of these standpoints cannot be overlooked.

2)
The eidetic afterlife hypothesis is in no way meant to invalidate or replace mainstream systems of spirituality. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis simply avoids metaphysical issues altogether.

Inverting the popular conception of life after death into a pre-death experience has many beneficial consequences in the "real" world, not the least of which is cultural unification. The understanding that each of us dreams/creates our own specific afterlife promotes fellowship and tolerance among all religions. We are all fellow dreamers, though our dreams may differ.

3)
The eidetic afterlife hypothesis leads to a unique system of ethics not reliant on the dictates of a hypothetical otherworldly authority. Instead, each one of us holds ourselves directly accountable. This means total responsibility is assumed in every action of every waking moment. There are no rhetorical stratagems to ease you of the horror, shame, and despair you create during your life's journey. You are your own judge, and you cannot deceive yourself. No amount of "Hail Marys" will rid you of the guilt that was never honestly resolved. Ego defense mechanisms acquired in the waking world to fool yourself into contentment will be of no use during your last breath. Dreams have a will of their own to dredge up things forgotten or suppressed.

The dream variation of the afterlife concept is user friendly and impartial. Its very foundation (your memories and thoughts) demands complete accountability unto yourself. You will definitely die, and quite possibly before this event, you will be subjected to everything you ever felt, sensed, thought, and did—everything your subconscious/unconscious database ever stored—perfect and inescapable justice. "Organic" justice for atheist and theist alike. Be mindful of what you fill your psyche with.

4)
The eidetic afterlife hypothesis allows the atheist to believe the afterlife is a "perfect storm" of physical-chemical processes, the components of which can be identified and researched, while permitting the theist to believe the experience of eternity that occurs during the dying brain process is all part of God's divine plan. If divinity exists, then physics and chemistry must also be suffused with divine spirit.

5)
We will all become characters in one another's dreams. How will you be visualized? Interesting moral considerations arise from the eidetic afterlife hypothesis. If you want to dream of a peaceful hereafter, you would be wise to live out your days peacefully in peaceful environments. If you spend your short life in toil, strife, and anxiety, then heaven help you in the nightmarish eternity that awaits. None of us wish to relive painful situations, so we should be careful not to upload painful experiences into one another's memory banks. Everyone, including the staunchest atheists, will be held accountable to whatever the broadly defined, ingrained sentiments of right and wrong are in their particular sociosphere.

6)
Everyone falls short of the manmade notion of perfection. We have all given in to petty and base emotions. We have all harmed, and we have all been harmed. We have all been abused and treated unfairly. Should all of us, victimizers and victims alike, have to forever relive our

mistakes and tortures during that last endorphin rush of dreamed eternity? This is where traditional religious institutions may play a role, though not in any conventional sense. Waking-world religions serve a useful purpose in the dreamlife—they provide hope and a way to ease the burden of those who are truly remorseful for their transgressions. Theology fulfills this function through the introduction/establishment of Compassionate Savior Mechanisms. Who or what are these mechanisms? They are whoever you have been sufficiently conditioned to believe they are: white Jesus, black Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Krishna, Vishnu, Kuan Yin, maybe even your "mommy" or "daddy" or great-great-grandfather (in the case of ancestor worship). Compassionate Savior Mechanisms are, in essence, psychological ploys to ease the ego of undeserved suffering. These savior stories (whether based on reality or not) must be learned/programmed in the waking world to have an effective presence in the concentrated eternity of the eidetic afterlife. This would explain why people who claim to have had near-death experiences always see a culturally specific conception of the afterlife they are most familiar/comfortable with. Christians never see the Buddha, and Buddhists never see Jesus, and nobody ever sees almighty Zeus anymore. The only catch with these Compassionate Savior Mechanisms is that you must be truly repentant/worthy of forgiveness in your own honest appraisal, a feat easier said than done.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part fifteen:
Deconstructing Immortality

1. The oldest known account of immortality can be found in the oldest surviving work of fiction: the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, an ancient Sumerian tale from around 2100 BCE.

2. The concept of immortality came from the heavens. Everything here on earth changes with the passing of days, months, and years, but the sun and the moon and the stars appear to stay the same, going through the same cycles generation after generation, century after century. Nowadays science has taught us to see through the firmament's illusion of eternity. We know the sun will someday die, and the stars will all burn out; even the universe itself is growing older and colder.

3. What is the difference between the experience of living forever, and actually living forever? From a subjective standpoint, the difference would be indiscernible.

4. A strange man approaches you in a dream. He offers you immortality, any kind you wish. You say it would be nice to have a body that would never get sick, grow old, or die. He snaps his fingers. “It is done,” he says. A few years later you marry someone. You have children. You watch them all grow old and die. You marry someone else and have more children, only to watch them all grow old and die. After two centuries you grow extremely weary of the shortsightedness of your fellow humans. After three centuries you have experienced everything you ever wanted to experience, and boredom sets in. Everything we encounter in life is a “game” of sorts, from learning how to walk to tying your shoelaces to using spoons and forks to playing chess to earning an A+ on your math test to undergoing a job interview and so forth. Wouldn’t every game eventually become boring, no matter how epic and momentous? You can only climb Mount Everest so many times before it becomes the same old hike. The only way to keep eternity from becoming unbearably monotonous would be to immerse yourself in an infinite variety of tasks. But after three hundred years you have run out of things to occupy your interest. And after four hundred years you are downright suicidal. You try to end your life but discover this is impossible. Humanity goes extinct after ten thousand or so years (it probably happens much sooner), and you are left alone. By this point you are completely insane. Even if you take the time to learn all the skills necessary to design and build your own spaceship in which to explore the cosmos, after experiencing the universe’s most sensational expressions over and over, you will eventually become desensitized, and then bored. Extremely bored. Suicidally bored. Until the madness sets in. Welcome to eternity.

5. The easiest way for an immortal consciousness to keep eternity interesting would be to periodically erase your memory and relearn/replay all the games, which is what the universe itself might be doing through each one of us.

6. There is a massive difference between embodied (physical) immortality and disembodied (spiritual) immortality. Embodied immortality would still be susceptible to physical means of death, such as decapitation or drowning, or in the case of Dracula, sunlight. Such a state of immortality would eventually become a prison of paranoia, fearing any little thing which might rob you of your stolen years of accumulated experience. Even Wolverine and Deadpool’s mutant regenerative immortalities can be overcome by total incineration, leaving nothing left to regenerate. True immortality would have to be disembodied.

7. Mortality occurs through the natural aging process, sickness, disease, and physical trauma, which all basically amount to cellular deterioration and disorganization (when a bullet enters you, it disorganizes your regular cellular arrangements).

8. Suppose you say to the strange man, “For my version of immortality, I wish to be impervious to everything, like Superman, except I won’t even be susceptible to kryptonite, and I want superfast regenerative abilities on top of that.” In this case you can be assured to end up the last lonely human on an otherwise lifeless rock formerly called Earth, and once the planet is eventually obliterated by a stray asteroid or swallowed by the sun, you’ll be a frozen popsicle floating forevermore through space, your sanity long gone. It might take a million years, or even

a billion, but it'll happen. Then the final generations of stars will start burning out one by one until the entire universe is pitch black. And you'll still be alive to experience it all.

9. Let's say through technological advances humans eventually live to be three times as old as we do now. Would they feel the extra longevity? Humans nowadays tend to live twice as long as our ancient ancestors, but are we appreciative of the difference? Is our span of days something taken for granted no matter what the number is? Death still awaits us, its fear continuing to saturate our existence.

10. Our prehistoric ancestors had no fear of death, at least not the version involving the annihilation of personal identity. They feared being eaten alive, but the concept of non-existence was unknown to them.

11. Without personal identity, you won't be concerned about your lack of personal identity, so the main argument in favor of immortality seems to be that dying is a terrifying and possibly painful experience which is best avoided.

12. Many post-humanists and transhumanists believe that one day in the not-so-distant future, humans will upload their minds into computers, achieving quasi-immortality. Rather than transplanting the brain into a new receptacle (the brain would eventually decay into dust anyway), neurotechnicians will either *a)* gradually replace every neuron in a particular person's brain with durable nano-neurons until the person's entire brain has been overhauled, or *b)* record every brainwave frequency and synaptic algorithm (i.e., every brain state) associated with a particular person's mind and translate the information (i.e., the person) into either *a)* a robotic receptacle equipped with perceptual interface technology, or *b)* a computer-simulated reality. But what if our common conception of the mind turns out to be wrong? Even if there is such a thing as a mind as you currently understand it, how would you ever know if it was properly transferred, if *you* were properly transferred? What if you were trading your authentic existence for a very realistic copy of yourself, a self which wasn't you? How could a virtual you ever know if you were the real you? It certainly wouldn't matter to anyone else if you were the real you, as long as they couldn't tell the difference (and for all you know they might be virtual, too). How could a computerized personality prove it wasn't a computer-generated personality?

13. Uploading all of your brain's data and algorithms into a computer would not grant you immortality, but it might grant a simulation of you immortality, or at least the ability to function for a very long time. The human brain has a storage capacity of no more than a few hundred years, although I assume technological innovations would find a way to surpass this limit.

14. Perhaps we could achieve collective disembodied immortality by transforming our homeworld into a giant communication satellite and broadcasting our digitized will across all time and space, saturating the universe with our holographic mind-wave. But something that is omnipresent and omniscient would have no need to "do" anything anymore. If you are everywhere at once, there is no need to go anywhere, and if you know everything there is to know (because you are everything there is to know), there is no need to know anymore. Such a

state of ubiquitous being would ironically result in a state identical to non-being. You would be more akin to the force of gravity than anything with a personality.

15. The problems associated with collective physical immortality are many: overpopulation, economic collapse, the inequality of who gets initial access to such augmentation (probably only the wealthiest, i.e., the most corrupt), the dissolution of the family unit, and the difficulty replacing outdated ideas and ideals with newer and better practices. Societies, like organisms, evolve through death.

16. The human brain has tripled in size and complexity over the last seven million years. Each of us is but a cell in the collective embodiment of human consciousness, which has been growing and maturing throughout the eons. To arrest our collective physical and psychological development now would be akin to giving your thirteen-year-old child a drug to make them stop aging, confining them forevermore to a brain which isn't at its full potential. Death is integral to evolution.

17. Christianity is currently the world's largest religion, followed by Islam, with Hinduism coming in third. I asked my Christian friend why she was a Christian.

"I was raised in a Christian household," she said. "My family is Christian."

"What appeals to you about Christianity?" I asked.

"I want to live forever in the presence of the Lord," she said.

The reward of immortality in paradise is the main reason why people become adherents of Christianity (followed by the fear of eternal damnation), which is odd considering most of those people have no real conception of what an eternal afterlife would be like. They simply don't want their ego to suffer or cease experiencing itself. But what is there to do in heaven? Praise God for all eternity in perfect bliss? That sounds like it would get awfully boring really quick. Even if infinite ways are devised to praise the glory of God, this doesn't sound like a very fulfilling existence. In such a state, you'd be more like an ornament or piece of jewelry than an autonomous personality.

Freed from bodily limitations, maybe every second of existence would feel new and exhilarating. But would the identity encountering everything as new and exhilarating be the same identity that you currently identify as yourself? Wouldn't the super-jubilant and optimistic version of you only be a one-dimensional shell of your former self? Much of what makes you "you" on a daily basis is mired in bad habits and negative thinking. Subtracting these facets of your personality would be akin to giving you a lobotomy. So that version of you who spends eternity bubbling with joy and praising the divine won't really be you, not the "you" you are currently experiencing, the you who gets angry and sad and frustrated and worried and scared and…

"I never thought about it that way," said my friend the Christian, "but given the choice between a one-dimensionally joyous version of me and an eternally-suffering-punishment-in-hell version of me, I'd rather spend eternity blissed out of my gourd in heaven!" I admit she has a point.

18. The version of eternity discussed by the eidetic afterlife doesn't suffer the complications associated with the eternities conjectured by other religions, such as where heaven and hell are located, not to mention the overpopulation problem hell would surely be facing by now if it were a physical space.

19. The eidetic afterlife promises everyone their very own universe in the hereafter, a universe they themselves spent their lifetime creating.

20. If upon shedding this body you merged into a higher self which possessed all the memories of your past lives, you would cease to experience your former self and its attendant memories in the same manner as when you were alive. The higher self would be forever removed from the initial feeling of all lived experiences, the wonderment, the surprise, the thrill and terror. Only through mortality can we feel such highs and lows. We are such highs and lows, and if we distanced ourselves from these sometimes overwhelming feelings, we would also be distancing ourselves from the direct experience of ourselves. The difference is like visiting the Eiffel Tower in Paris versus watching a documentary about the Eiffel Tower at home. Under this scenario, your higher self's existence in eternity is not the actual reward for living a meaningful life. Eternity is merely home base for your higher self. Your vacations in the mortal realm (via reincarnation) are your actual rewards, even though they involve frightening experiences. Rollercoasters can be frightening too, but people generally enjoy them.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part sixteen:
Life Review and the Temporal Compression of Memories During the Dying Brain Process
(1 of 3)

The next three installments of *Notes Concerning Eternity* will focus on memory and temporal compression during the dying brain process, the last crucial puzzle piece in our deep exploration of near-death experiences and the eidetic afterlife.

1. Time is consciousness, and consciousness is the medium of experience, but time itself is not the medium of experience. Take a moment to ponder this.

2. All memories are temporal compressions of experience. It could equally be said that all memories are *informational* compressions of experience.

3. No memory is whole/complete or perfectly recreated/re-experienced. If you think of a movie, book, or song, you can only recall a fraction of it while unconsciously/intuitively assuming the rest. How does this factor into temporal dilation and the afterlife experience of “life review” or “eternity”?

4. Words and memories act as placeholders of experience. But is the unremembered portion of the experience/information actually located anywhere in the brain?

5. Certain objects act as “outer world” triggers for memories, such as mementos, photographs, clothes, jewelry, and toys. Other external memory-triggers include people, animals, words, gestures, songs, sounds (like an explosion, a babbling brook, or the click of a lighter), physical sensations (like being hugged, pinched, or punched), odors, tastes, locations, and situations. Memory exists all around us.

6.
Types of memory include: sensory, short-term, long-term, declarative, semantic, episodic, procedural, emotional, implicit, explicit, working, autobiographical, prospective, retrospective, echoic, iconic, spatial, associative, muscle, tactile, olfactory, flashbulb, recognition, recall, source, priming, eidetic, and hyper-dilated (the “life recall” experienced during near-death experiences). It’s common for different types of memory to overlap or work in conjunction with one another.

7.
Five degrees of memory compression:

1. Waking acts of recall.
2. The passage of time as experienced during meditative states.
3. The passage of time as experienced on psychoactive substances.
4. The passage of time as experienced in dreams.
5. The passage of time as experienced during the dying brain process.

8. You can never recall the whole experience of the memory, only the feeling that you had the whole experience, or more accurately, the feeling you had more of an experience than what you currently remember.

9. Absolute time is the objective passage of time, a.k.a. clock time, while perceived time is our subjective sense of an event’s duration. Time perception can be expressed as the ratio of absolute time to perceived time; when the two quantities differ, we call it time dilation.

10.
Five common claims about time during a near-death experience:

1. Time seemed to go faster than usual.
2. Time seemed to go slower than usual.

3. Everything seemed to be happening at once.
4. Time stopped, or lost all meaning.
5. My whole life flashed before me.

11. Familiar information is processed quickly and feels brief, while novel information takes longer to process and can make time feel elongated.

12. Stimulating experiences (whether joyful or traumatizing) feel fast in “real” time but are remembered as if happening in slow motion, while boring experiences feel slow in “real” time but are remembered as if happening in a fast-forward manner.

13. Emotions influence the memory encoding process. The memory encoding process shapes time perception. Therefore, intense emotions can significantly distort our experience of time. The dying brain process is an intensely emotional experience. In a zero-gravity experiment conducted by Stetson and colleagues, subjects perceived time as passing more slowly when free falling. The researchers presumed the intense fear experienced by the free-falling subjects activated the amygdala to enrich their memory with a secondary encoding of the experience, resulting in the judgment of temporal dilation retrospectively. Evolutionarily, such fear-based time distortion enhances our chance of survival by allowing us to act as fast as possible in dangerous or life-threatening situations.

Stetson C, Fiesta MP, Eagleman DM (2007) Does Time Really Slow Down during a Frightening Event? *PLoS ONE*, 2(12): e1295. doi:10.1371/ journal.pone.0001295.

14. The memory process does not work like rewinding images on a strip of film. Memory works selectively, with attentiveness and emotional content highlighting which experiences are relevant for our survival and well-being.

15. The amygdala is crucial to processing emotional information, playing a vital role in forming and consolidating emotional memories. The amygdala becomes highly active when experiencing emotionally arousing events. This activation enhances memory encoding by boosting attention and perception. Memories with strong emotional content, like a first kiss or a traumatic event, are often more vivid and tend to feel longer. The amygdala's involvement during these events strengthens the memory consolidation process, making the experiences easier to recall later. The amygdala is also sensitive to novelty, especially to new and unusual stimuli. This sensitivity helps the brain identify and prioritize attention to potentially important information. Richly encoded memories make events feel longer in retrospect, which is related to how much information is stored and recalled about the event, rather than the actual passage of time.

16. Neuromodulators such as dopamine, epinephrine, and serotonin modulate our perspective of time. Studying this form of temporal distortion is easy because researchers can simply raise the levels of each molecule through the administration of a specific drug, and then ask the subject to estimate when a minute or another interval of time has passed.

17. “Dr. Huberman from Stanford university illustrates the effects of dopamine on our internal clocks as fine slicing of time bins. This, he describes, is like ‘increasing the frame rate on your camera.’ When a video increases its frame rate enough, slow motion is achieved, and dopamine and norepinephrine increase this frame rate. The opposite is true with serotonin, where the time bins elongate, making the world seem faster than your internal clock, as indicated by the underestimation of how fast time had passed in the study.”

Mitchell JM, Weinstein D, Vega T, Kayser AS. Dopamine, time perception, and future time perspective. *Psychopharmacology (Berl)*, 2018;235(10):2783–2793. doi:10.1007/s00213–018–4971-z.

18. Temporal compression refers to the common observation that recalling past events typically takes much less time than the original experience. Recent neuroscientific research has begun to uncover how the brain enacts this compression and why it occurs. Key neural players include the hippocampus and related networks, which encode sequences of experience in “time cells” and can rapidly replay them, as well as large-scale memory circuits such as the default mode network (DMN) that integrate recalled episodes. People report episodic memories as condensed snapshots or “flashes” of key moments rather than full, real-time replays. Theories of compression emphasize adaptive factors (e.g. focusing on goal-relevant information) and the fact that memories are reconstructed from salient “chunks” (event boundaries) rather than continuous streams. In a variety of experiments, researchers have used wearable cameras and cue-driven replay tasks to quantify temporal compression. Finally, the “life review” which occurs during near-death experiences—vivid, panoramic recall of one’s life in an instant—appears to be an extreme manifestation of temporal compression. Although direct neural data on life reviews are scarce, phenomenological studies and case reports suggest that mechanisms similar to normal memory compression (e.g. parallel retrieval of multiple autobiographical cues) are at work. This installment of the *Notes Concerning Eternity* reviews these findings in detail, emphasizing recent (within the last decade) progress while also noting foundational ideas and introducing new directions of understanding.

19. “Recent studies have revealed the existence of hippocampal neurons that fire at successive moments in temporally structured experiences. Several studies have shown that such temporal coding is not attributable to external events, specific behaviours or spatial dimensions of an experience. Instead, these cells represent the flow of time in specific memories and have therefore been dubbed 'time cells'. The firing properties of time cells parallel those of hippocampal place cells; time cells thus provide an additional dimension that is integrated with spatial mapping.”

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25269553/

20. It is well known that damage to the hippocampus impairs memory of the temporal order of events in humans and animals, and that the hippocampus is activated during the encoding of new memories and the recall of prior sequences of events.

21. “[…] it is generally thought that the mechanism for spatial representation in the hippocampus involves place cells, which are the principal neurons of the hippocampus that fire when an animal occupies a particular location in an environment. In striking similarity, recent evidence shows that there are also hippocampal ‘time cells’ that fire when an animal is at a particular moment in a temporally structured experience, encoding scalar time and controlled by temporal dimensions of the experience.”

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4348090/#R9

22. The duration of the interval between neuronal spikes provides information regarding temporal sequences and the passage of time.

23.
Temporal coding is linked to memory performance in three ways:

1. Temporal coding develops as humans and other animals acquire temporally structured memories.
2. Specific temporal codes are associated with specific memories.
3. Temporal coding predicts accurate memory judgements about specific events.

24. Researchers observed neurons in the hippocampal region fire in sequence as human subjects watched video clips, and then the hippocampal neurons “replayed” these same sequential firing patterns as subjects mentally recalled the clips.

25.
The following is an example of the compression of memory to its most salient details:

A. Decide to make toast (a1: Locate bread. a2: Open cabinet that has loaf of bread. a3: Grab loaf of bread. a4: Open package of bread. a5: Remove two slices of bread. a6: Reseal bread package. a7: Put bread back in cabinet. a8: Take slices of bread to toaster.)

B. Toast the bread (b1: Put two slices of bread in two separate toaster slots. b2: Adjust the timer on the toaster, or at least check to see if it is at the desired setting. b3: Press down on lever to begin toasting.)

C. Gather accoutrements for making toast while bread is toasting (c1: Open cabinet and grab a plate. c2: Close the cabinet. c3: Set plate on kitchen counter. c4: Open utensil drawer. c5: Grab butter knife. c6: Close utensil drawer. c7: Set butter knife on plate. c8: Open refrigerator door. c9: Grab butter. c10: Close refrigerator door. c11: Set butter next to plate on kitchen counter.)

D. Wait for the timer to go off and then prepare toast for consumption (d1: Place toasted slices of bread on plate. d2: Remove lid from container of butter. d3: Use butter knife to spread butter on one slice of toasted bread. d4: Place slice of buttered toast on plate. d5: Pick up the other

slice of toasted bread. d6: Use butter knife to spread butter on second slice of toasted bread. d7: Put lid on butter container. d8: Place butter container back in refrigerator.)

Capital letters represent salient moments of experience.
Lower case letters represent associated events within the salient moments.

The entire lived experience of the toast-making event can be portrayed encoded as: A (a1-a2-a3-a4-a5-a6-a7-a8), B (b1-b2-b3), C (c1-c2-c3-c4-c5-c6-c7-c8-c9-c10-c11), D (d1-d2-d3-d4-d5-d6-d7-d8)

The recalled experience of the toast-making event can be portrayed encoded in its compressed form as: A, B, C, D

In the example above, A, B, C, and D are considered event boundaries, as opposed to the lower case letters, which are considered procedural details. **Research suggests that event boundaries are five times more likely to be remembered than other parts of events.**

26. Studies of temporal compression (the ratio of the time needed to mentally re-experience an event compared to the actual event duration) show that events are replayed, on average, about eight times faster than the original experiences. This compression mechanism seems to operate by representing events as a succession of moments separated by temporal discontinuities.

27. “Episodic memories are records of short-term goal processing and so should be formed at junctures in goal processing. But goal junctures can occur at many different levels, from making a cup of tea, answering a telephone call, to writing a paper, etc. The [self-memory system] framework proposes that episodic memories are formed at goal junctions of action sequences when there is major change in the predominating goal. For example, in typing, the fine-grained goals of striking the keys are not points at which episodic memories are formed. Ceasing to type and moving to some other activity, making a cup of tea, daydreaming, etc. should, according to the [self-memory system], be points at which episodic memories are formed. In any given day then many memories will be formed but relatively few will remain accessible for enduring periods of time. Thus, a person can remember in great detail their trip to work this morning and other features of the day’s activities. Within a short retention interval, perhaps as little as 24 hours, most of these recent episodic memories are no longer accessible. Only those that possess an enduring association with current goals are retained and even then must become integrated with knowledge structures in the autobiographical knowledge base if they are to be retained in the long-term.”

Conway, Martin A. Memory and the self. *Journal of Memory and Language*, Volume 53, Issue 4, October 2005, Pages 594-628.

28. Time cells are neurons in the hippocampus and entorhinal cortex (a related area) which fire at specific moments during a cognitive task or experience. They are analogous to “place cells” which fire when an animal is at a specific location, suggesting hippocampal neurons encode

both spatial and temporal information. The entorhinal cortex is anatomically positioned between the neocortex and the hippocampus, and its major role is to bridge information exchanges between the two regions.

29. Time cells are triggered by the temporal cues (the beginning and end of an event or action) of an experience, just as place cells are mediated by the spatial cues (landmarks) of an environment. Time cells and place cells are in fact the same hippocampal neurons.

Eichenbaum, Howard. Time cells in the hippocampus: a new dimension for mapping memories. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 2014 Oct 1;15(11):732–744.

30. When a memory is retrieved, the same set of neurons (engram cells) that encoded the initial event are activated again, allowing the individual to recall the experience.

31. "[…] the parietal–temporal junction is activated in humans making temporal-order judgements. Interestingly, in a prefrontal–parietal–medial-temporal network, different oscillation frequencies were associated with memory for the spatial location and memory for the temporal order of events. These findings suggest that prefrontal areas and parietal areas which are classically considered part of the 'where' stream (that is, the visual stream for spatial processing) are also involved in the perception of time, and these areas have robust inputs to the hippocampus."

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4348090/

32. "Combining the findings that support the existence of firing chains with the observations that a broader signal which defines entire memories is needed, perhaps the most likely network mechanism involves slowly evolving temporal context dynamics (that is, signals that spread across multiple sequential events) selecting specific firing chains that represent specific temporally organized memories."

Wallenstein GV, Eichenbaum H, Hasselmo ME. The hippocampus as an associator of discontiguous events. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 1998;21:317–323. doi: 10.1016/s0166-2236(97)01220-4.

33. The "broader signal which defines entire memories" alluded to above has been discovered: Sharp-wave ripples are "bursts of coordinated neural activity in the high gamma band (80-120 Hz in humans), originating in the hippocampus and thought to play a prominent role in memory consolidation by coordinating hippocampal-neocortical memory replay." Simply put, sharp-wave ripples orchestrate the reinstatement of memories between the hippocampus and neocortex.

Buzsáki, G. Hippocampal sharp wave-ripple: a cognitive biomarker for episodic memory and planning. *Hippocampus*, 2015; 25:1073-1188.

34. Our sense of time arises from the way neurons encode information and retrieve encoded information.

35. Neurophysiological studies point to the hippocampal–cortical memory system as central to temporal compression. In animals, hippocampal "time cells" have been discovered that fire in sequence to mark successive moments within an experience. For example, in rats, Eichenbaum and colleagues found that hippocampal neurons sequentially activate during delay intervals, with each cell firing at a particular moment in the sequence. These time cells effectively bridge gaps between discontiguous events by encoding moments of experience into temporal sequences. When humans recall an event, the hippocampus may similarly generate a compressed sequence of neural activity: a rapid replay of the key instants. Intracranial EEG studies have shown that episodic recall involves faster-than-real-life timescales which reverse the original perceptual flow of signals, consistent with a temporally compressed replay.

36. Whenever someone is presented with a reminder, studies via electrophysiological recordings suggest that sensory cues proceed into the medial temporal lobe within 500 milliseconds. Once a cue reaches the medial temporal lobe, it elicits either an "old information" or "new information" signal. If the cue is deemed "old information" (i.e., familiar information, or information already experienced), a hippocampal process of pattern completion is initiated to reinstate the target memory in the neocortex, which generally takes another 500 to 1500 milliseconds, resulting in the experience of recollection. The memory retrieval process includes the reversal of perceptual processing streams.

37. The hippocampus initiates cortical reinstatement in a bottom-up manner, working in conjunction with the posterior parietal cortex, which aids recall by devoting additional attentional resources to recovering the relevant mnemonic features. Theta oscillations play a pivotal role in clocking the reinstatement process.

38. Time resonates from one moment to the next via brain wave oscillations, giving rise to our experience of duration. **The temporal dilation described by the eidetic afterlife hypothesis reaches its most dramatic phase approximately 500 milliseconds *after* death.** There is an extremely brief duration of time (anywhere between 100 and 500 milliseconds, depending on the type of stimulus and the particular brain) that passes between the initial moment of total brain death and the actual cessation of experience. Normally this is the span of time needed to translate stimuli into perception and thought, but what happens when the continuous feed of stimuli abruptly halts? The experience of this final informational wave will resonate beyond the period of stimulation, becoming an echo of consciousness. Decoupled from the physical process of its manifestation, this last transmission of experience will not be subject to the same physical constraints as every moment of experience that came prior. Under ordinary physicalist models this 500-millisecond gap is negligible; however, under the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis, this final brain wave may become *the experience of eternity*.

39. "During cued recall, sensory information pertaining to the cue enters the hippocampus in a feedforward fashion. When successfully matched with an overlapping, stored memory trace,

hippocampal pattern completion then reinstates mnemonic target content back in the neocortex. The cue-to-memory conversion should thus be associated with a reversal of the information flow from a feedforward, cue-driven input process to a feedback, memory-driven output process."

Staresina, Bernard P. et al. A Neural Chronometry of Memory Recall. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, Volume 23, Issue 12, 1071-1085.

40. Remembering involves a reversal of information flow, so it generally occurs quicker than perception's feedforward processing of stimuli. Recollection is not beholden to the same (slower) physical processes as sensory perception. Normally the perception comes into your field of awareness, gets caught up in theta oscillations which connect it to relevant memories, thereby synthesizing the perception into meaningful experience. "Several brain regions, including medial prefrontal and anterior thalamic nuclei, have been discussed as pacemakers of this rhythm, synchronizing the hippocampus with larger subcortical and neocortical networks. In the medial temporal lobe, the timing of neural activity within a theta cycle appears to play a central role in the emerging memory codes. In rodents, different neural assemblies that represent different information (e.g., the animal's location in a maze) fire sequentially along a theta cycle, with their order of firing mirroring trajectories the animal has taken in the past. Such firing occurs in so-called gamma bursts, which group together the cells that constitute a neural assembly. A distinct spatial mnemonic code has thus been identified in rodents that comprises sequential gamma bursts nested into slower theta oscillations."

Gupta, A. S. et al. Segmentation of spatial experience by hippocampal theta sequences. *Natural Neuroscience*, 2012; 15:1032.

41. "It could be speculated that these volleys [of information] take the form of rapid forward sweeps of incoming sensory information and rapid backward sweeps of mnemonic information (i.e., replay events) during opposing phases of a theta cycle. Once a reminder has been sufficiently processed to initiate a pattern completion process, each retrieval phase of a theta cycle provides a time window for the hippocampus to coordinate the reinstatement of discrete 'parcels' of content in the neocortex, presumably during ripple events. Neocortical areas including the parietal lobe then accumulate this mnemonic evidence, yielding the phenomenology of reinstatement once the evidence surpasses a given threshold. […] It is also consistent with evidence that the theta rhythm is not limited to the hippocampus but rather synchronizes larger neocortical networks during both encoding and recall, presumably facilitating inter-regional communication."

Staresina, Bernard P. et al. A Neural Chronometry of Memory Recall. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, Volume 23, Issue 12, 1071-1085.

42. If theta brain waves organize clusters of discontiguous memories into coherent usage (i.e., relevant experience), what happens when these oscillations are disrupted? Most likely our orderly, linear experience of reality breaks down as the brain itself shuts down.

43. “It has been proposed that gamma activity may represent a marker of true memories (Sederberg et al., 2003). This hypothesis views gamma activity as an index of the reactivation of the neural circuits originally recruited during encoding, which usually includes the occipital regions originally engaged in the encoding of visual objects and scenes (Slotnick and Schacter, 2004). This relationship between gamma band and real memories also involved the occipital region. Such a relationship was not observed for NDE memories (possibly suggesting that they were the result of an internally generated experience, e.g., hallucination-like form). In contrast, the increase of theta band power at the temporal region positively correlated with the recall of the details of NDE memories associated with the perception of the memory as a well-organized sequence of events (i.e., “spatiotemporal organization” subscale). Although evidence is not conclusive at present, it is suggested that cortical theta oscillations are connected to intracranial recorded hippocampal theta oscillations. Because the critical role of hippocampus in memory functioning is well established (Squire, 2009), it was hypothesized that cortical and hippocampal theta oscillations dynamically interact, supporting memory operations (Bastiaansen and Hagoort, 2003).”

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4063168/...

44. “Direct evidence in humans that elements of a reactivated episodic memory are grouped by theta-nested gamma bursts is still missing. During offline periods following learning, replay has been shown to coincide with hippocampal ripples in the gamma band, and human EEG recordings provide initial evidence for ripple-bound memory reinstatement during awake recall. The missing link, at present, is the demonstration that ripple events are clocked by the hippocampal theta rhythm during active recall. A recent EEG study provides encouraging evidence for such clocking in working memory. While participants were mentally rehearsing letter sequences, the elements constituting a sequence could be decoded from neighbouring gamma bursts (>80 Hz) along the theta cycle. In long-term memory, it has been demonstrated that the human brain deploys a theta–gamma code for the encoding of novel event sequences and for binding memories to their encoding context. Theta-to-gamma coupling also generally increases during recall; for example, when participants recognize a stimulus as old or recall autobiographical events. It is therefore conceivable that theta oscillations clock the timing of memory recall signals in human long-term memory.”

Heusser, A. C. et al. Episodic sequence memory is supported by a theta–gamma phase code. *Natural Neuroscience*, 2016; 19:1374.

45. One theta cycle takes approximately 200 milliseconds.

46. Brain wave frequency bands are categorized as delta (0.5–4 Hz), theta (4–8 Hz), alpha (8–12 Hz), beta (12–30 Hz), narrow-band gamma (30–60 Hz) and broad-band gamma (60–150Hz).

47. A model of memory: First, an informational cue is introduced. Second, the cue progresses toward the hippocampus for approximately 500 milliseconds. Third, hippocampal processes

reactivate the cellular codes associated with the particular experience. Fourth, mnemonic content is reinstated in cortical sites, with retrieved information flowing in reverse (feedback) compared with the encoding process, which is feedforward. It's important to note that the speed of feedback communication will likely deviate from its initially feedforward-encoded counterpart due to temporal compression. Fifth, theta rhythms coordinate hippocampal-to-neocortical communication, providing discrete windows of time for the progression of information from one instant to the next.

48. Take a moment to ponder what would happen if the perceptual-to-conceptual flow of information was severely disturbed in the late stages of memory retrieval. How might this affect your experience of reality?

Notes Concerning Eternity, part seventeen:
Life Review and the Temporal Compression of Memories During the Dying Brain Process (2 of 3)

This is the second installment of *Notes Concerning Eternity* devoted to explaining the near-death experience known as a "life review." If you have not read the first installment devoted to this subject (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part sixteen), please take the time to do so before reading this one.

1. We remember the gist of an event in long-term memory more than the actual details of the event, which is to say we remember an altered re-coding of the initial memory. Studies have shown that conceptual information is classified more rapidly than perceptual information.

Liu, Y. et al. Human replay spontaneously reorganizes experience. *Cell*, 2019; 178:640-652.e14.

2. “A follow-up magnetoencephalographic (MEG) study used sequences of short movies that together constituted a coherent episode (e.g., a movie of a boat, divers jumping off the boat, divers under water). A critical word stimulus was presented during one of the three sequential clips. During retrieval, participants were asked to mentally replay the full movie to judge when in the sequence the word had appeared. Behavioural reaction times and neural patterns suggested a time-compressed forward skipping through the sequences during recall. This finding is consistent with other ‘within-event’ evidence indicative of a time-compressed forward recall process. […] The same study also demonstrated that abstract, structural information about a sequence is consistently replayed before object-specific information. […] Furthermore, just as most place cells ‘remap’ when a salient spatial cue is altered, most time cells form qualitatively different representations (‘re-time’) when the main temporal parameter is altered. Hippocampal neurons also differentially encode the key events and disambiguate different event sequences to compose unique, temporally organized representations of specific experiences.” **Basically, memories are reorganized (“re-timed”) and altered (“re-coded”) to fit the needs of the current circumstances of their retrieval. Every retrieval of a particular experience will adjust the memory associated with that experience based on the new context in which it arises.**

Michelmann, S. et al. Speed of time-compressed forward replay flexibly changes in human episodic memory. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2019; 3:143.

3. When animals navigate or learn a route, hippocampal place cells replay those spatial trajectories during rest or sleep, but in a highly accelerated timescale (often 10 to 20 times faster). This fast replay suggests an intrinsic propensity of the hippocampal system to compress sequences. While most sharp-wave ripple studies focus on spatial tasks, the same principle is likely true for episodic sequences. During the act of recollection or even quiet rest, the hippocampus may “scroll” through memories, replaying life events rapidly.

4. In addition to the hippocampus, large-scale cortical networks modulate compressed recall. The default mode network (including medial prefrontal, posterior cingulate, and parietal areas) is well known to support autobiographical memory retrieval. Recent studies show that when people verbally retell the incidents of a past video clip, statements that are more compressed (summaries of events) elicit different neural patterns than detailed recall. Summarized utterances (covering many seconds of the event in a few words) caused weaker reinstatement of the original scene patterns in the posterior medial cortex, and widespread shifts in default mode network parcels. In effect, highly compressed recall led to less direct overlap with the original encoding patterns, indicating an informational transformation. This suggests that **the default mode network constructs a “gist” of the event, skipping intermediate details and thereby shortening the timeline in memory.** By contrast, temporally precise recall (step-by-step reporting of all scenes) preserved stronger hippocampal-to-parietal pattern reinstatement.

5. **Encoding an experience to memory takes significantly longer than recalling that same experience.** The brain doesn’t need to recall the entire experience to re-experience the gist of it. During your “life review” you obviously won’t remember every bowel movement you ever

took, though you might remember one or two that were noteworthy for some reason or another.

6. Oscillatory brain wave activity indicates informational compression. Gamma-band oscillations (and their coordination with theta rhythms) are linked to memory retrieval. Most importantly, some of the oscillatory signatures seen in normal recall also appear in near-death contexts. *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* reported that a dying patient showed surges of gamma and theta waves just after cardiac arrest, associated with memory-related activity.

https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/aging-neuroscience/articles/10.3389/fnagi.2022.813531/full

7. Working together, hippocampal time cells + the organizational capacity of brain wave oscillations + orchestration by the default mode network form a neurophysiological basis whereby past events are rapidly replayed in memory. **These mechanisms inherently operate on a compressed timescale relative to the original experience, meaning they are always compressing time. During "life review" these mechanisms are merely performing their everyday functions at an accelerated/augmented rate.** There's nothing mystical going on here, folks.

8. Take a moment to ponder what would happen if an inordinately large amount of time cell signatures were activated simultaneously. Your linear experience of time would most certainly be altered in a drastic manner. You might even feel as if numerous events were occurring all at once, or that your whole life was flashing before your eyes.

9. During anoxia, or oxygen deprivation (the first stage of the dying brain process), the brain releases a massive amount of glutamate. Glutamate is the primary excitatory neurotransmitter, promoting neural communication and memory formation. The brain is also flooded with serotonin during the dying process. Serotonin inhibits potassium ion channels while activating 5-HT2A receptors, which increases the likelihood of synaptic firing, in other words, augmenting the exchange of neuronal information. This could explain the near-death phenomenon known as "life review."

10.
Question: How does depolarization (flipping the charge in a neural cell to allow the synaptic firing of a bit of information) lead to psychedelic experiences and the eidetic afterlife?

Answer: Pyramidal neurons are connected by dendrites to other pyramidal neurons in other cortical columns, allowing them to spread information in waves. Cortical columns evolve strong information pathways to other cortical columns throughout your lifetime. Cortical columns are also connected to other cortical columns by many weak information pathways, which rarely undergo synapse, except when you are dying. **There is a mass depolarization of pyramidal neurons during the dying brain process, allowing regions of the brain to communicate with one another that don't normally do so. During the dying brain process, pyramidal neurons fire**

frantically through every synaptic connection, transmitting information through strong and weak pathways equally, creating an overload of varied experience signals. Every pattern of activation becomes equally possible. Think of the effect this would have on your consciousness.

11.
A) When deprived of oxygen, neurons go through a brief phase of enhanced excitability (Fields et al., 2015), facilitating greater volumes of informational exchange in shorter periods of time.

B) Highly synchronous brain waves have been observed to propagate after the cortex is functionally disconnected from external stimulation, e.g., during deep sleep or anesthesia (Sanchez-Vives and McCormick, 2000; Steriade et al., 2001), facilitating informational exchanges of episodic memory as opposed to sensory perceptions.

C) Dissociative drugs (including certain types of neurochemicals) and psychosis are linked to surges in gamma synchronization (Lee et al., 2017; Li et al., 2019), facilitating informational exchanges between networks that do not normally communicate with one another.

Oxygen deprivation, cortical disconnection from external stimuli, and neurochemical psychosis are all aspects of the dying brain process that bear directly on extreme memory compression and the "life review" experience.

12. Memory compression allows us to remember overall events without being able to recall anything more than a few specific mental snapshots of the remembered experience.

13. Autobiographical recollections typically emerge as salient moments rather than continuous sequences, giving an overall sense that the remembered event *took less time* than the real life experience it was based on. In everyday life, one might say "everything happened so fast" even when recalling a lengthy episode. In near-death experiences (NDEs) and extremely traumatic situations, this effect is famously referred to as a "life review", a rapid succession of vivid life memories. NDE surveys reveal that many NDE survivors report their entire life history "flashing before their eyes like fast-forwarding through a movie."

14. A prospective study of survivors of cardiac arrest found that 8 out of 62 (13%) resuscitated patients who experienced a near-death experience also reported a "life review" (Van Lommel et al., 2001). Another analysis of several hundred NDE cases found 24% of them to report some degree of "memory flashback" during the experience (Kelly & Kelly, 2007). NDEs are not the only triggers for a life review: out of 205 people who encountered some form of life-threatening danger, 60 survivors described experiencing a "panoramic memory" of their life (Dlin, 1980, Noyes and Kletti, 1977).

15. Some people have described their life review experience as occurring in chronological order, replaying their life story in a linear fashion from birth to the moment of death (or near-death). Other people have described their life review experience as fractal-like, based on

meaningful associations, where one recollection of an event leads to a constellation of other related memories, none of which may be in chronological order. There have even been cases where people described their life review experience as occurring backward, rewinding through the scenes of their life until arriving at the earliest memories of infancy. In the rarest cases, people with strong expectations (whether fearful or hopeful) for certain events to happen in the future have claimed to experience visions of the future during their life review.

16. During the life review of a near-death experience, we are not just recalling the memories associated with the strongest (i.e., the most reinforced) dendritic pathways. **Neuronal synapse levels are closer to the firing threshold during the dying brain process, allowing the transmission of more varied types of information than usual. This may explain why people claim to remember events during their life review with more empathy and clarity (i.e., more information) than when the events were originally experienced. Events in memory accrue additional information with the passing of time. Reflection adds insight to past events, and this insight becomes remembered co-extensively with the original event during a life review.**

17. Some memories are based on coherence (usually to keep your worldview and sense of identity intact), and some memories are based on correspondence (usually to ensure perceptions align with facts). Corresponding memories are often altered by the process of recollection (the re-encoding process) for the sake of coherence (i.e., for the sake of the current narrative).

18. "Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000) proposed that the autobiographical knowledge base contains three hierarchically associated knowledge structures: lifetime periods, general event memories, and event specific knowledge (which we call event components). Event specific knowledge is suggested to be initially associated with its general event memory (the general event memory is in turn associated with one or more lifetime periods or life themes) […] Thus the encoding of *autobiographical event component order* may begin with the defining of an event's boundaries, i.e., the beginning and end of the experience." **Establishing these boundaries serves to define the experience of the remembered event, determining which experiential components of the memory should be associated with its current manifestation.**

Christopher D.B. Burt, Simon Kemp, Martin Conway. Ordering the components of autobiographical events. *Acta Psychologica*, Volume 127, Issue 1, January 2008, Pages 36-45.

19. **During a near-death experience, the default mode network may determine one's entire existence as the event to be remembered, in which case a life review is orchestrated. This category of remembrance only becomes available during the hypersynaptic phase of the dying brain process. The default mode network assesses the type of life review experience to be constructed and creates a narrative based on the individual's particular mindset at that time. In the case of an individual suffering multiple NDEs, each life review would constitute a different retelling, with different events emphasized and downplayed based on different psychological dispositions informing the circumstances of each constructed narrative.**

20. Several theories have attempted to explain the life review's underlying mechanics. From a psychological point of view, life reviews have been characterized as a hallucinatory escape from the actuality of death via "mental time travel to past experiences" (Noyes & Kletti, 1977), which may include scenes from any and all phases of life, including experiences that are unpleasant or frightening (Blackmore, 1993). Another psychological motivation may be the need to validate or reassess one's life achievements (Butler, 1963), and yet another psychological motivation may be that life reviews are the ego's desperate attempt to maintain identity when faced with the prospect of dissolution. Life reviews can also simply be explained as the phenomenological result of altered functionality in the prefrontal, medial temporal, and parietal cortices, which process autobiographical memories (Bancaud et al., 1994, Vignal et al., 2007, Arzy et al., 2009).

21. Out-of-body experiences are the hallmark of spatial alterations during NDEs, and life reviews are the hallmark of temporal alterations during NDEs.

22. I have spent many years studying the dying brain process and what happens during near-death experiences. If I happen to undergo a life review at some point, how will all my memories studying the mechanics of near-death experiences affect my panoramic replay? Am I inadvertently training myself to awaken within the final dream of eternity? Take a moment to ponder the strange implications of such an occurrence.

23. Even though all control over your sense of identity quickly dissolves amid the neurosynaptic hurricane of the dying brain process, hell may be averted by a single second of lucidity.

24. Research suggests that memories deemed important to one's identity remain in a state of high accessibility (Conway & Holmes, 2004). Unfortunately, negative memories are harder to forget than positive ones. Negative memories "stick" longer and more vividly because they are often associated with an alteration to our sense of self.

25. There is the intuitive memory of being yourself from moment to moment, and there is the experience of remembering an event in the past, which is different (involving different brain regions) than imagining an event in the past, which is different (involving different brain regions) than imagining an event in the future, which is different (involving different brain regions) than planning for a future event, all of which are different than the life review experienced during the dying brain process.

26. The left hippocampus and the right middle occipital gyrus are significantly activated during the (re)construction of past and future events, while the right hippocampus is significantly deactivated during the (re)construction of past events. Only during the creation of future event scenarios is the right hippocampus activated. The ventral medial prefrontal cortex and posterior cingulate cortex are the areas most activated when imagining future event scenarios which are considered relevant to one's personal goals.

27. If you want to know what you might recall about yourself during a near-death experience, ask yourself this question: "Who am I?" and then phrase your answer in the form of "I am…" Do

this six times. During the first three times, try to state positive things, and during the last three times, try to state negative things. Don't overthink it. Say the first things that come to mind. Do not suppress answers that make you feel uncomfortable or ashamed. Whatever answers manifest naturally in your mind will indicate your strongest memories, which will most likely be the source material for the chapters of your life review. Your answers will undoubtedly be reducible to roles and traits, each with their own attendant memories to back up the claim.

28. Multiple studies have concluded that memory is about 80% visually based.

29. Memories include: actions, thoughts, feelings, locations, sensory perceptions, and facts (such as 2 + 2 = 4, or red traffic lights mean "stop" and green traffic lights mean "go").

30. At the very least, memory requires: the feeling of recalling something, turning one's attention inward, and the emergence of certain types of information into awareness.

31. The awareness that you are experiencing an event from a different point in time is intimately associated with the process of remembering, but the subjective experience of your memories is liable to change during the dying brain process. Without the awareness that you are experiencing an event from a different point in time, you are effectively time traveling to the past and reliving an experience, though phenomenologically you are simply having an experience which may or may not seem eerily familiar.

32. Autobiographical memory retrieval generally takes anywhere from 2 to 7 seconds; however, the conversion of a simple cue to a full-blown procedural or semantic memory can occur in as little as a few hundred milliseconds.

33. "There are two memory systems, one phylogenetically older than the other. The older memory system is episodic memory. This is an image-based correspondence system that has little in the way of conceptual organization and which is mainly specialized for recent memories. It is a system that evolved to support adaptive short-term goal processing and is cue driven. In neuroanatomical terms it is a posterior temporo-occipital system. It is a system that would allow most species to operate effectively in their environment day-by-day. The more recent system is knowledge-based and conceptually organized. It provides an organizing context for episodic memory. In a sense, it sits on top of episodic memory and provides an access route that locates associated sets of memories in meaningful ways. It is a system in which coherence is the dominant force and it is specialized to support long-term goals. I suggest that the knowledge-based system is, neuroanatomically, a prefrontal anterior-temporal system."

Martin A. Conway. Memory and the self. *Journal of Memory and Language*, Volume 53, Issue 4, October 2005.

34. Studies confirm that NDE memories are similar to real memories in terms of detail and emotional content. NDE memories are significantly different from memories of imagined

events. EEG results indicate the recall of a memory based on real events is associated with two memory-related frequency bands: alpha and gamma. NDE memories are commonly associated with the theta band, a well-known marker of episodic memory. The EEG pattern for the recall of NDE memories differs from the recall pattern of imagined events, suggesting that NDE memories cannot be considered equivalent to imagined memories.

35. NDE recall is linked to delta waves (associated with memory consolidation, deep meditative states, and hallucinations) and theta waves (associated with episodic memory), but not gamma waves (associated with memories of events experienced in the physical world). **EEG findings suggest that NDE memories are episodic memories of events experienced in a peculiar state of consciousness.**

36. What if, during a near-death experience, you remember that people undergo panoramic life reviews during near-death experiences, and remembering this prompts your subconscious to orchestrate a panoramic life review for you? The content and interpretation of near-death experiences are influenced by individual and cultural factors. While panoramic life reviews are considered a common feature in Western cultures, they are all but absent in NDE accounts from Japan (Tachibana, 2003).

37. **When observing the electrical activity of the dying brain with an EEG, researchers noticed that cortical networks associated with imagining and daydreaming did not light up as much as areas associated with recall, and these areas lit up far brighter than when they are observed under normal (non-NDE) circumstances.**

38. Panoramic life reviews have been reported as occurring in chronological and non-chronological order. What if the designation of chronological order versus non-chronological order is a result of trying to remember the life-review experience after the fact? What if the ordering for such an experience is always non-chronological, but our brain's natural tendency to narrate events sequentially imposes a linear framework that results in a more comprehensible and therefore communicable recollection of the experience?

39. Time is simply the accumulation of memories and the order in which they are recalled. Memories mainly operate to protect oneself from disorientation and physical harm. Distortions in memory generally serve to maintain a coherent identity. How might this relate to the panoramic life review of a near-death experience?

40. Researchers have managed to experimentally induce experiences similar to life reviews. Veronika Nourkova developed a "compressed life review" experiment in 2020 that tracked eye movement. Participants initially learned several autobiographical memories with verbal cues. Later, they listened either to a single memory cue or a simultaneous "choir" of all the cues. Remarkably, when hearing the choir of cues, half of the subjects reported a life-review-like experience of multiple memories rapidly flooding their mind. Eye movements confirmed their reports—during the multi-cue bombardment, participant gazes were mostly immobile

(consistent with focusing on internal imagery) compared to the active scanning observed during single cues.

Veronika V. Nourkova. Compressed Life Review: Extreme Manifestation of Autobiographical Memory in Eye-Tracker. *Behavioral Sciences*, 2020 Feb 26:10(3):60.

41.
Q: Is the life review experience a mnemonic illusion?
A: From a subjective standpoint every experience involves illusion to some degree.

Q: Is there any difference between the "experience" of a panoramic life review and the "reality" of a panoramic life review?
A: From a subjective standpoint there is no difference.

42. In 1892 CE, Albert Heim, a Swiss geologist, published an account of his experience during a 70-foot fall from a cliff in the Alps. He wrote: "I saw my whole past life take place in many images, as though on a stage at some distance from me. I saw myself as the chief character in the performance." In 1790 CE, British naval officer Francis Beaufort nearly drowned and reported experiencing a life review. But the oldest mention of a life review experience is found in Plato's magnum opus, *The Republic* (circa 375 BCE), a section of which is devoted to the tale of Er the Pamphylian, who died in battle and came back to life twelve days later with insights regarding the underworld and the afterlife, including a report detailing how the newly dead must recount all the wicked deeds they committed in their lifetime.

43. Panoramic life reviews have an equal chance of being experienced from a first-person or third-person perspective, according to numerous NDE testimonies.

44. Life reviews are not proof that the mind can somehow separate from the body and travel to an alternate reality for judgment. Rather, **life reviews are evidence that working memory's capacity to transmit information is drastically augmented during the dying brain process, allowing the recollection of so many experiences in such a short amount of time that they are perceived as occurring simultaneously.**

45. **Once a strong association between a memory cue and its associated experience is established, the cue becomes the associated experience's representative in working memory, in effect replacing the whole unit of information, presumably for the sake of efficiency.** "At the time of recall, only the node corresponding to this specific [experiential] structure needs to be available in working memory, along with the retrieval cue specifying the type of desired information" (Ericsson & Kintsch, 1995).

Ericsson K.A., Kintsch W. Long-term working memory. *Psychological Review*, 1995;102:211–245.

46. Panoramic life reviews are conjectured to rely on memory cues rather than complete memories, allowing highly accelerated yet very limited access (just enough to get the gist) to

autobiographical episodes, resulting in the experience of having multiple memories occur simultaneously. **In other words, the life review experience may arise through the rapid activation of long-term memory cues without the additional step of loading the associated experiences into working memory.**

47. In most cases, the life review experience happens in mere seconds. Intriguingly, NDE survey respondents report that the perceived duration of their life review did not feel long, despite covering decades of events. This dissociation between objective and subjective time—experiencing a vast amount of memory content in a relatively short duration—is the hallmark of temporal compression.

48. Research suggests that episodic memory naturally encodes events in moments or "slices" of experience, with gaps between them. Findings also suggest that, on average, remembered events replay approximately 8 times faster than their occurrence in real time, representing only snapshots of the original flow. Events that are goal-directed or salient to one's identity are replayed with more detail (less compression) than routine experiences. Events that are considered unimportant to one's "storyline" drop out over time, while milestones that are key to establishing one's identity (for better or worse) become consolidated. Thus, temporal compression reflects graded memory storage: Important experiences are encoded and retrieved in greater detail, while trivial content is given less attention or simply omitted, yielding a sped-up narrative that preserves meaning.

Olivier Jeunehomme & Arnaud D'Argembeau. The time to remember: Temporal compression and duration judgements in memory for real-life events. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology (Hove)*, 2019 Apr;72(4):930-942.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part eighteen:
Life Review and the Temporal Compression of Memories During the Dying Brain Process
(3 of 3)

1. Aside from clock time and circadian rhythms, there are six systems of memory involved with temporal perception:

A) Sensory memory, responsible for the retention of stimuli immediately after their physical presence ceases, providing a brief window for the integration of perceptual information.

B) Short-term memory, responsible for briefly holding information such as the order and duration of stimuli, which is crucial for making accurate judgments about prospective timing.

C) Working memory, responsible for processing information about current or recent events, such as solving a math problem or following the directions to a recipe.

D) Semantic memory, responsible for retrieving concepts and language, such as knowing what a bicycle is, or that the capital of France is Paris.

E) Procedural memory, involved in the performance of learned movements, such as tying your shoelaces or riding a bicycle.

F) Episodic memory, responsible for storing and retrieving personal past experiences, including information about the time and place of events.

2. During the dying brain process, our memories may flash by during a "life review" experience as if played on fast-forward. As this is happening our ability to process information is greatly enhanced, which allows us to perceive the scenes flashing by in detail while at the same time being aware of the accelerated timescale. Is this because some part of us, even if only lingering autonomic biorhythms, is still influencing our experience of time, anchoring us to external temporality. The span between arriving at death's threshold and actually treading across is immeasurably vast (i.e., the difference between dying and being dead), though to an outside observer it seems to occur in an instant. What happens in our subjective experience when the final tether to "outer world" temporality becomes severed?

3. We experience the past (in the form of memory) as not-the-present because we have an awareness that we are mired in another time, namely the present, or now. But what if that awareness was absent? What if we were disconnected from the outside world's stimuli which is constantly calibrating and organizing our sense of continued identity throughout time? Would we experience intangible memories of the past as physical events happening in the present? Wakeful consciousness knows that past events are not physically happening in the present, because wakeful consciousness has a firmly entrenched sense that one event happens after another, and in order to remember anything from the past, we must currently be in a different moment (i.e., the present moment). But what if the organizational element of our events malfunctions or is overloaded, such as during the hypersynaptic activity associated with the final stage of the dying brain process, and while this is happening the neural networks responsible for our perception of time are progressively deactivating and disconnecting from "outer world" stimuli? Under such circumstances, every memory that came into awareness might very well be perceived as physically occurring in the present. Take a moment to ponder this. I have just provided you with a plausible description of the components and process of an endogenous version of time travel!

4. To put it another way, let's say there are two versions of awareness occurring whenever you remember something in the waking world: there is the version of you experiencing the memory somewhere in an intangible "inner world", and there is the version of you that is firmly in the present of the tangible "outer world" and aware that you are experiencing a memory. But what if circumstances turned off the version of awareness connected to the present and tangible

“outer world”? Your awareness would then be limited to the experience of the memory alone. For all intents and purposes, you would be fully in the memory. It's important to note that you wouldn't necessarily be replaying the memory like a video (which can only replay the same content). This is because a vestige of your “consciousness in the present” would still be intact, namely your will (i.e., your power to intentionally alter circumstances). You would be reliving the scenes of your life as opposed to replaying them, and the hallucinatory neurochemical cocktail released during the dying brain process (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part ten) would assuredly be altering these memories in unforeseeable ways.

5. During the most intensely immersive phase of the life review—once all sensory connections to the physical body and the outside world have totally shut down—one may literally become the content of one’s memories, rather than just watching them flash by in a disassociated or third-person manner. Autobiographical memory essentially amounts to personal identity.

6. As we have already discussed (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part sixteen and part seventeen), the temporal compression of memories involves event segmentation. Cognitive research has proven that people naturally parse ongoing experience into discrete events. Memory prioritizes boundaries. We retain and replay the “bookmarks” of experience while skipping the chapters in between. A life review might string together such boundaries (the major events of our lifetime) in rapid succession, leaving out much of the interstitial details.

7. Temporal compression may be seen as an emergent property of how memory is organized. Memories are reinstated via associations to sparse contextual cues, not via linear time codes. When recalling something, the brain leaps from cue to cue along a contextually-driven narrative, compressing extraneous details (i.e., details which aren’t relevant to the particular context of the current act of recall).

8. By activating numerous memory cues simultaneously, test subjects had the experience of retrieving all the episodes at once, although the experience was illusory. According to experiments conducted by Veronika Nourkova, the simultaneous activation of many memory nodes produces the subjective experience of an all-at-once playback, but in fact only a few cues at a time are active, so the replay is still sequential, just accelerated. Her experiments were carried out on people in good health, whose brains were not undergoing the hypersynaptic informational outbursts associated with the final stage of the dying process.

Veronika Nourkova. Compressed Life Review: Extreme Manifestation of Autobiographical Memory in Eye-Tracker. *Behavioral Sciences*, 2020 Feb 26:10(3):60.

9. Temporal compression is a natural byproduct of memory. Memories are stored and accessed in discrete, salient chunks (i.e., event boundaries, goal-relevant moments, and emotional highlights), so recalling them yields a skeleton version of their original timeline. This economy is for the sake of speed and efficiency, allowing rapid “mental time travel” to the essential experiences of one’s past without the burden of irrelevant data. Under extreme stress or

unusual brain states, this process is further accelerated to the point of yielding an entirely novel type of recollection experience: the panoramic life review.

10. Researchers investigated temporal compression by having test subjects record their everyday activities with wearable video cameras that timestamped every millisecond. Later, when the participants were asked to recall certain events, researchers used the video to measure how long the original events took, then timed the participant's mental replay. On average, memories ran about 8 times faster than the original duration of events. This method also allowed researchers to compare the compression of goal-directed actions (such as picking up a glass of water and taking a drink) versus simpler, more automatic actions like walking, finding that goal-oriented segments were replayed more slowly (i.e., less compression, more information).

Olivier Jeunehomme & Arnaud D'Argembeau. The time to remember: Temporal compression and duration judgements in memory for real-life events. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology (Hove)*, 2019 Apr;72(4):930-942.

11. Temporal compression works via memory cues which may or may not activate more richly detailed experiential codes. It's possible that memories retrieved during a life review are only the gists of past experiences, but it's equally possible that life reviews are a combination of memory cues rapidly activating neural information processors which have been synaptically augmented through the dying brain process, in other words, the enhanced transmission of information is matched by the enhanced processing of information, resulting in richly detailed experiences which seem to flash by in an instant.

12. "Many studies have shown that, when people retrieve episodic memories, brain activity patterns similar to those present at the time of encoding a given item or event are reinstated in a set of brain regions which typically include the default mode network (DMN) and high-level sensory areas. […] The more compressed a retrieved memory is, the more dissimilar its neural representation should be to that observed during encoding." Thus, memory compression requires an alteration in the original encoding of the experience. Only the information necessary to connect events is retrieved, omitting extraneous details and even altering facts to create a more easy-flowing and coherent narrative. Now imagine this function on hypersynaptic overdrive.

Elizabeth Musz & Janice Chen. Neural signatures associated with temporal compression in the verbal retelling of past events. *Communications Biology*, 2022 May 23;5:489.

13. Vivid memories allow us to re-experience past events in a narrowly focused yet deeply immersive manner. Compressed memories allow us to review past events in a wider, more episodically connected manner, but their experience is more shallow than a vivid memory. Think of the **vivid mode** of memory retrieval as expository and from the "worm's eye view," and think of the **compressed mode** of memory retrieval as narrative and from the "bird's eye view." One form of memory retrieval provides an experience similar to time travel, while the

other form of memory retrieval provides a summary of related experiences. Now imagine a state of consciousness where the vivid mode and the compressed mode are both working at maximum functionality simultaneously. The hypersynaptic phase of the dying brain process could enable such a unique state of consciousness, which is typically referred to as a **life review**.

14. The default mode network (DMN) participates in episodic memory retrieval and builds mental models of situations and perspectives, constructing our personal narratives on a subconscious level, i.e., without our awareness or ability to exercise control. In poetic terms, the DMN is a ghost who whispers stories about us to our subconscious.

15. Numerous case studies have recorded unusual brain activity in dying rats. In 2022, Ajmal Zemmar and associates reported the first continuous EEG readout of a human patient during cardiac arrest. They focused on the 30 seconds before and after the heartbeat stopped, observing a burst of high-frequency gamma oscillations right after the loss of oxygen, particularly in areas associated with thinking and remembering. In Ajmal's own words, "We measured 900 seconds of brain activity around the time of death and set a specific focus to investigate what happened in the 30 seconds before and after the heart stopped beating. Just before and after the heart stopped working, we saw [an increase] in a specific band of neural oscillations, so-called gamma oscillations, but also in others such as delta, theta, alpha and beta oscillations." This unprecedented research suggests the brain may momentarily enter an augmented state of memory activation during the final stage of the dying process (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part four).

https://louisville.edu/medicine/news/first-ever-recording-of-a-dying-human-brain-shows-waves-similar-to-memory-flashbacks?fbclid=IwY2xjawMkEI1leHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETBGUWQxblhYdzJncWF6SHlIAR7ogvdq7J9dGFHhdCkEqplhzT16k0IgPv-gL_fRwfhiNd5MMBBWfBvlVkNeUw_aem_5wS-4K5vL2hgy3Gma6f8ug

16. "The modern view gives the alpha band more active functions and relates it primarily to the inhibition of irrelevant signals. A similar inhibitory function has also been suggested for delta band activity, which is thought to suppress networks that are not essential for task accomplishment. Beta oscillations have been widely linked with movement, in particular during stable postures or akinesis, but also in perceptual and cognitive processes. Theta band activity has been known to exist in the hippocampus of different species since the middle of the 20th century and has been historically related to navigation, but also memory processing and memory recall, especially in verbal and spatial memory. Finally, high-frequency gamma band activity has been attributed as a correlate of attention and awareness, out-of-body experiences, meditative states, and conscious perception."

Nathan A Shlobin, Ajmal Zemmar et al. What happens in the brain when we die? Deciphering the neurophysiology of the final moments in life. *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, 2023 May 9;15:1143848.

17. The elevated presence of gamma oscillations observed in the final stage of the dying brain process, along with delta, theta, alpha, and beta oscillations, suggests the hyper-synapsing mind may learn things during its life review. **Combining the experience of a life review on fast-forward with the perception of time passing in slow motion may provide ample opportunity to reflect upon one's successes and failures. The benefit of hindsight and the accrued wisdom of a lifetime would certainly deepen this period of reflection, imbuing every recalled episode with more meaning (i.e., information) than it originally contained**.

What if, during the final stage of the dying brain process, every one of us achieves a state of enlightenment, and what if reaching this enlightened state is the factor that ultimately allows us to let go of this life, this body, this dream?

18. The "life review" phenomenon reported during near-death experiences appears to be an extreme case of everyday temporal compression which occurs mainly because the firing threshold of every neuron is raised significantly closer to synapsing, i.e., transmitting information (for a detailed explanation of this process, see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part nine). Neuronal hypersynaptic activity is a side effect of prolonged hypoxia/anoxia (restriction of oxygen to the brain). This results in a qualitatively different experience, not just an intensification of ordinary compression. Judith Katz and associates found that even healthy people can experience partial life reviews under stress. Veronika Nourkova's experiments provide additional support for Katz's conclusion—by artificially amplifying the normal cue-triggered retrieval process, she was able to induce life review experiences in healthy subjects. Both Katz and Nourkova's findings imply that extreme physiological or psychological conditions might simply push the brain into maximal-activation mode, where a lifetime of memories flood the mind all at once.

Katz, J., Saadon-Grosman, N., & Arzy, S. The life review experience: Qualitative and quantitative characteristics. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 2017 Feb:48:76-86.

19. Many cognitive researchers believe the life review experience may simply be the tipping point of an accelerated memory retrieval process. Other researchers, however, caution that retrospective reports of near-death experiences cannot definitively prove that the brain actually replayed a lifetime of memories; the reports might partly reflect post hoc construction or even confabulation. Nonetheless, the findings of researchers such as Katz and Nourkova lend credibility to the idea that life reviews involve the same systems (hippocampal–DMN networks and brain wave oscillations) used in ordinary memory, just hyperactivated. **Mounting evidence suggests the life review phenomenon is not a mystical retrieval of one's life story for divine judgment, but rather a case of extremely fast, compressed autobiographical recall over which the DMN superimposes a narrative based on one's conditioning**.

20. "The hippocampus is critical to remembering the flow of events in distinct experiences and, in doing so, bridges temporal gaps between discontiguous events. […] Hippocampal time cells signal the nature and timing of salient events that occur at particular moments in temporal

sequences, just as place cells encode specific events in the locations they occur in space (Manns and Eichenbaum, 2009). […] Time cells partially 'retime' when a key temporal parameter is altered, just as place cells partially 'remap' when critical spatial cues are altered (Muller and Kubie, 1987). […] Place cells and time cells may reflect fundamental mechanisms by which hippocampal neuronal networks parse any spatiotemporal context into quantal units of where and when important events occur."

Christopher MacDonald et al. Hippocampal "time cells" bridge the gap in memory for discontiguous events. *Neuron*, 2011 Aug 25;71(4):737–749.

21. Extreme memory compression and hypersynaptic time dilation co-occur during the dying brain process to produce the life review experience. During the climax of the dying process, your brain rapidly replays autobiographical memories on a highly compressed timescale while anoxia and the massive release of neurochemicals such as dopamine and adrenaline stretch your subjective sense of time, making a few seconds feel enormously prolonged. The limit of this temporal elongation has yet to be determined, though the eidetic afterlife hypothesis suggests the upper bound may be **the experience of eternity** (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part twenty-eight).

22.
Five Aspects of Temporal Phenomenology Associated with the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis:

Life Review (Extreme Memory Compression): Just before death, neural networks (especially hippocampal circuits) may trigger an exhaustive sweep through one's long-term memories. Neuroscientific research has shown that hippocampal "sharp-wave ripples" normally broadcast extended scenes up to 20 times faster than the real-world events they are based upon. Augmented by the hypersynaptic activity observed during the dying brain process, this broadcasting speed may be well over 200 times faster, perhaps even more than 2000 times faster! No method has been devised as of yet to measure the limit. Moreover, "time cells" in the hippocampus maintain a logarithmic, compressed timeline of events. Together these imply that an entire lifetime's narrative can be reactivated almost instantaneously, consistent with near-death experience reports of, "My whole life flashed before my eyes."

Michelmann, S. et al. Speed of time-compressed forward replay flexibly changes in human episodic memory. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2019; 3:143.

Timelessness: A feeling of timelessness may ensue as various neural networks responsible for measuring and perceiving time begin to malfunction and go offline. The effect of dopamine released in abundance during the dying brain process may also contribute to a feeling of timelessness.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sense-time/201712/why-time-stops-near-death#:~:text=,nonexistent%20or%20everything%20was%20%27now

Nonlinearity (External Clock-Time Disconnection): The experience of time may become non-linear as the dying brain's relationship to linear, outer world measurement and calibration is severed. Nonlinear experience also reflects a collapse of past and present memory cues into a chaos of hypersynaptic activation, whereby the usual temporal flow disappears.

Subjective Time Dilation (Internal Clocks Slow Down): A surge of adrenaline (released during the "fight-or-flight" response) accelerates neural processing so that external events seem to unfold in slow motion.

https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/33341#:~:text=The%20most%20common%20experience%20during,The%20perception%20of%20the

Information Overload (Neural Transmissions Speed Up and Diversify): Neuronal synapse levels are closer to the firing threshold during the dying brain process, allowing the transmission of more varied types of information in greater volumes than usual (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part seventeen, sections 9 & 10).

23. It is common for near-death experience survivors to report a feeling of infinity, i.e., a feeling of being in a timeless state, while also being completely aware of how long they were unconscious or clinically dead.

24. Does the eidetic afterlife hypothesis propose anything in the way of an actual afterlife? Not in the traditional sense, but it does offer the experience of eternity. An afterlife is traditionally considered a type of continued awareness of oneself after the cessation of all bodily functions. On an objective level, the eidetic afterlife hypothesis suggests an extremely brief span of time wherein brain waves are still active while the brain is not*, which technically constitutes a persistence of the self (consciousness?) beyond bodily death, especially when this brief span of time is subjectively experienced as significantly longer. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis blurs the line between life and death.

* The temporal dilation described by the eidetic afterlife hypothesis reaches its most dramatic phase approximately 500 milliseconds after death. There is an extremely brief duration of time (anywhere between 200 and 500 milliseconds, depending on the particular brain) that passes between the initial moment of total brain death and the actual cessation of experience. Normally this is the span of time needed to translate stimuli into perception and thought, but during the hyper-elongated (hyper-informational) state of consciousness associated with the dying brain process, this may be the experience of eternity**.**

25. The hippocampus provides the raw material for the life review. In animals and humans, hippocampal neurons ("time cells") naturally encode sequences of events on compressed timescales. Sharp-wave ripples in the hippocampus rapidly replay learned sequences. Research suggests that, at the time of death, a cascade of sharp-wave ripples races through neocortical networks associated with autobiographical memory, with the plausible effect of broadcasting a lifetime of experiences on fast-forward.

Michelmann, S. et al. Speed of time-compressed forward replay flexibly changes in human episodic memory. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2019; 3:143.

26. The default mode network (specifically the dorsal medial prefrontal cortex, posterior cingulate cortex, precuneus, and angular gyrus) integrates and contextualizes the hippocampal replay during the life review experience, transforming the barrage of isolated memory fragments into a unified personal narrative. In simple terms, the hippocampus provides episodic scenes and the default mode network shapes them into a story.

Yitzhak Norman et al. Hippocampal ripples and their coordinated dialogue with the default mode network during recent and remote recollection. *Neuron*, 2021.06.020.

27. Critics have expressed doubt regarding the brain's ability to orchestrate such profound experiences while undergoing the dying process. However, EEG studies have proven that some dying patients retain coherent default mode network (DMN) activity comparable to healthy brains, suggesting the neural infrastructure for internal experience is still intact. Further evidence of complex brain activity during the dying process was provided when high-frequency gamma oscillations, linked to attention and memory retrieval, were observed to surge immediately after cardiac arrest.

Elizabeth Blundon et al. Resting state network activation and functional connectivity in the dying brain. *Clinical Neurophysiology*, 2022 Mar:135:166-178.

28. The brain does not cease to function all at once, unlike the heart. Different regions of the brain die at different times, with the brainstem shutting down last (under normal circumstances). In 1969, members of the American Electroencephalographic Society proposed that the criteria to determine brain death should include the absence of cerebral activity on an EEG for 30 minutes, indicating that brain activity may not terminate abruptly, but rather gradually. It should be noted that an EEG can assess cortical activity but is not designed to measure deeper regions such as the brainstem. Therefore, even though the EEG may display a flat line, the brainstem could still be active. The brainstem is the foundation for conscious experience, associated with alertness and wakefulness.

29.

Temporal Perception in Dream Time

Our perception of time is not consistent, even during waking hours. Our mental state, emotional content, and focus can cause us to perceive time differently. This variability is even more extreme in a dream state, where the brain is not constrained by a fixed external reality. Studies have found that high emotional arousal can alter time perception. During a highly emotional or bizarre dream, the brain may process information more rapidly and shift from one scene to the next at an accelerated rate, creating the sensation of a longer, more detailed narrative. Lucid dreamers (sleepers who are aware they are dreaming) have been used

in studies to help researchers understand the mechanics of dream time. While some experiments with lucid dreamers performing simple cognitive tasks (like counting) showed time passing normally, others involving more complex motor tasks showed dream time stretching out. This suggests that time perception can be inconsistent even within a single dream.

A groundbreaking study of "lucid dream time perception" conducted by Daniel Erlacher and associates discovered that, "By means of left-right-left-right eye signals, the durations of each counting exercise or squat sequence could be determined and compared to the duration of waking performances. While there was no significant difference between wakefulness and dream state for the counting intervals, participants required about 40% more time for performing squats in lucid dreams than in the waking state. This finding contradicts the results of prior studies which supported equivalence of lucid dream time and physical time."

In the words of one of Dr. Erlacher's lucid dream study participants, "I gave a [left-right-left-right eye signal to notify the researcher I was starting the task] and then I jumped, and I felt immediately that jumping was very different compared to wakefulness. Just a different perception of the body, also slower. I continued and did the forward roll—which lasted almost eternally. When I finished the task I gave a [left-right-left-right eye signal to notify the researcher I was done]." The task duration was indeed 163% longer in dream time than when performed awake (14.8 seconds compared to 5.6 seconds). This is due to the fact that in a lucid dream the mind must take the time to create/mimic the physics involved in actions such as jumping and rolling, whereas reality does the job for us in the waking world. In the waking world, if you jump up, gravity will automatically bring you back down, no thinking necessary. But in the dream world, if you jump up, you just might float away. In the dream world you must will yourself back down, which requires more time to process the additional information.

Daniel Erlacher & Melanie Schädlich et al. Time for actions in lucid dreams: effects of task modality, length, and complexity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2014 Jan 16;4:1013.

30. During the dying process, anoxia and the release of various neurochemicals push the brain into a trance-like state where the perception of time and self is drastically altered. In this state, default mode network (DMN) orchestration and hippocampal replay are unconstrained by external sensory input, producing otherworldly imagery more vivid than a dream. Activity in the cortex gets slower as we near death, eventually approaching isoelectric silence, but research has shown that the brain may enter a hyper-synchronized yet chaotic mode that permits immersive memory scenes right as we die.

31. Here's the simplified version of a plausible explanation for the life review experience based on neuroscience: lack of oxygen to the brain initiates a process whereby synaptic thresholds are raised closer to firing, allowing greater volumes of information than usual to be transmitted, and while this is happening hippocampal sharp-wave ripples are compressing autobiographical sequences, thus facilitating even more information to be transmitted in shorter durations, with the default mode network (DMN) integrating the compressed sequences into a coherent narrative. Add to this a flood of neurochemicals that cause us to experience time in slow

motion, such as dopamine and adrenaline, combined with failing neural networks responsible for our sense of temporality, and the result is subjective time dilation. Together these factors produce an eidetic “life review” with an afterlife-like quality.

32. And after what feels like an eternity, when the final moment of finality finally comes, you will not be afraid. You won’t even notice.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part nineteen:
The Quantum Leap of Consciousness

For this section of notes we're going to explore the most hypothetical aspect of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis: What happens at the very end of the dying brain process, during the last moment of consciousness, a moment that cannot be subdivided or extended any further? This would come after the hyper-synaptic moment of "total life recall"* and the "timeless moment of bliss" [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part seven].

*"When you die, your brain is deprived of oxygen and nutrients, so it shuts down. This shutting-down process takes away the brakes… and suddenly what seems to be happening is, it gives you access to parts of your brain that you normally can't access… all your thoughts or your memories or your interactions with everyone else come out." —Sam Parnia, MD, PhD, director of the Human Consciousness Project

[1] The “total life recall” moment naturally morphs into the “timeless moment of bliss” as the outermost layers of your brain progressively deteriorate to the innermost recesses of your brainstem, finally culminating in the “quantum leap of consciousness”. This leap is not so much a moment (which involves duration, however infinitesimal) as it is an instantaneous transition into the momentless, which is altogether different than timelessness or the void. Ultimately, that which constitutes the subjective experience of oneself is a wave, or series of neural oscillations. Turning off consciousness is different than flipping a switch and turning off a light, because we actually undergo the experience of our consciousness turning off. The “momentless” is called such because it consists of two (or possibly more) outcomes to the prior moment (one outcome is that you are alive, the other outcome is that you are not alive), each of which occurs simultaneously, but neither of which ever materialize into being. During the very last stage of the dying brain process, multiple states of consciousness cohere into a unified state of quantum superposition.

“As angels have no notion of time, so they have a different idea of eternity from humans on earth. To the angels, eternity means infinite state, not infinite time.” --Emanuel Swedenborg

[2] Time resonates from one moment to the next via brain wave oscillations, giving rise to our experience of duration. There is an extremely brief duration of time (approximately 100 milliseconds) that passes between the initial moment of total brain death and the actual cessation of experience. Normally this is the span of time needed to translate stimuli into perception, but what happens when the continuous feed of stimuli abruptly halts? The experience of this final stimulus will resonate beyond the period of stimulation, becoming an echo of consciousness. Decoupled from the physical process of its manifestation, this last transmission of experience will not be subject to the same physical constraints as every moment of experience that came prior. The last transmission of experience will be governed by quantum weirdness.

Recap: The final state of consciousness could very well be suspended in a superposition between the infinitesimal and infinity, where you are: *A)* alive, *B)* not alive, *C)* both alive and not alive, and *D)* neither alive nor not alive.

[3] The only way in which you simply cease to be alive (i.e., one moment you’re alive, and the next moment you’re dead) is in the experience of those outside yourself. You yourself will have no such clearly delineated experience. Experience cannot experience its own cessation of experience.

[4] What’s real at this point? Perhaps a brief look at phantom limb pain will shed some light here. Is phantom limb pain real? If you are experiencing phantom limb pain, then it is real to you. But this answer could also suffice for the experience of ghosts, angels, and pink elephants. Maybe the question of phantom limb pain is best answered through an application of the tetralemma, which is a superposition in argumentative form: There is a sense in which phantom limb pain is real. There is a sense in which phantom limb pain is not real. There is a sense in

which phantom limb pain is both real and unreal. There is a sense in which phantom limb pain is neither real nor unreal.

This does not mean only one of the four answers is correct. The tetralemma is meant to demonstrate how each answer is correct yet limited in its own way, and only by considering them in totality does the fullest expression/interpretation of the truth become revealed.

In any observation involving a quantum superposition, you experience *A* separately, you experience *B* separately, and you experience *A* and *B* simultaneously in a manner that is neither the experience of *A* nor *B*. Note: There may be many more observational/experiential states than *A* or *B* (perhaps infinitely more).

[5] The hyper-synaptic "total life recall" stage of the dying brain process is very much in tune with the judgment phase of the recently deceased described by many religions, just as the "timeless moment of bliss" is uncoincidentally similar to paradisiacal/heavenly conceptions of the hereafter, indeed acting as the template for such. But the third and final stage of the dying brain process (the "quantum leap of consciousness") is the entering into actual mystery, an incomprehensible state of experience: quantum superposition. Whatever happens at this point, no mortal can speak of with assuredness. Those who wish to reduce consciousness to material processes often fail to understand how strange matter/energy behaves at the quantum level.

At the quantum level of reality, a particle may be in more than one place simultaneously, or be in more than one state simultaneously (such as being a particle and a wave at the same time). The last moment of consciousness falls under the jurisdiction of quantum mechanical processes, rather than classical physics.

[6] Einstein's relativity is unable to account for the weirdness of quantum mechanical behavior*, failing to explain (among other things) how and why the wave function instantaneously collapses to a single point under observation/measurement. Hugh Everett's relative state formulation solves the problem by reinterpreting the collapse as a branching—splitting the observer into multiple observational outcomes/standpoints, which opens up even more questions. Our most advanced theories fall short (perhaps infinitely so) of providing a faithful description of reality (or its underpinning, if you prefer).

Neuroscience seeks to explain the mental by means of a thorough description of the physical, but what if extra-physical factors (i.e., faster-than-light travel, hyperspatial entanglement, quantum superpositions, the collapsing/branching of the universal wavefunction) are necessarily involved in the explanation of a mind, especially a mind undergoing the dying brain process?

*The Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics argues that multiple simultaneous observational experiences collapse into a single observation during a quantum measurement, whereas the Many-Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics argues that the single observer splits (or branches) into multiple simultaneous observational experiences.

[7] The speed of light is not the limit of speed, as Einstein once postulated, but merely the limit of human perceptibility. Anything unbound by the speed of light could potentially be everywhere at once.

[8] How could a subatomic particle—for the sake of convenience let us describe it as a spherical object—be rotating to the left and rotating to the right *at the same time?* Answer: Place it in front of a mirror and look at its reflection. In a similar vein, how could a subatomic particle be spinning up and spinning down *at the same time?* Answer: You can *A)* place it in front of a mirror and look at its reflection, *B)* move the position of the observer from one side of the particle to the other, or *C)* place the spinning particle between two observers; one observer will experience it spinning upward, and the other observer will experience it spinning downward. Superpositional outcomes of quantum measurements have nothing to do with a particle undergoing physical changes, such as splitting into multiple copies of itself. It is the observer's mind which undergoes the change.

[9] The quantum substratum of the universe tends toward indecisiveness in an unagitated state. This indeterminate state is commonly referred to as a superposition. Please note, it is an error to suppose the quantum event is in one or another determinate state, but we just don't know which. The quantum event is actually in every possible state it can be in, or at the very least: of being in a particular state and not being in a particular state, which means it has the property in question, it does not have the property in question, it both has and does not have the property in question, and neither does it have nor not have the property in question. None of the resulting states are more or less real than the others, and all of them are experienced equally, except each particular state of the observing system only experiences a fraction of the overall collapsing/branching of what is known as the universal wavefunction, or the quantum state of the entire universe/multiverse.

[10] The substate of any superposition is relative to every other substate comprising the superposition; which is to say, the outcome/experience of any given quantum measurement is relative to the remaining possible outcomes/experiences in the superposition.

Simply put, a quantum superposition is a simultaneous multiplicity of states associated with a singular event or object. Perhaps I should let the discoverers of these mysterious mechanics explain the concept in their own words, as anyone else sounds preposterous saying these things...

[11] In the words of theoretical physicist Hugh Everett III: "Whereas before the [quantum] observation we had a single observer state, afterwards there were a number of different states for the observer, all occurring in a superposition. Each of these separate states is a state for an observer, so that we can speak of the different observers described by the different states. On the other hand, the same physical system is involved, and from this viewpoint it is the *same* observer, [albeit] in different states for the different [facets/dispositions] of the superposition

(i.e., [the same observer] has had different experiences in the separate [facets/dispositions] of the superposition)."

(1957a), 'On the Foundation of Quantum Mechanics', Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University.

[12] Theoretical physicists Bryce DeWitt and Neill Graham are responsible for interpreting Hugh Everett III's reinterpretation of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics to mean that "it makes sense to talk about a state vector for the whole universe. This state vector never collapses and hence reality as a whole is rigorously deterministic. This reality, which is described *jointly* by the dynamical variables and the state vector, is not the reality we customarily think of, but is a reality composed of many worlds. By virtue of the temporal development of the dynamical variables the state vector decomposes naturally into orthogonal vectors, reflecting a continual splitting of the universe into a multitude of mutually unobservable but equally real worlds […]."

(1973), *The Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

[13] There is no preferred disposition/substate of a superposition. In the words of Hugh Everett III: "The whole issue of the transition from 'possible' to 'actual' is taken care of in the theory in a very simple way—there is no such transition, nor is such a transition necessary for the theory to be in accord with our experience. From the viewpoint of the theory *all* elements of a superposition (all 'branches') are 'actual,' none any more 'real' than the rest. It is unnecessary to suppose that all but one are somehow [cancelled out], since all the separate elements of a superposition individually obey the wave equation with complete indifference to the presence or absence ('actuality' or not) of any other elements. This total lack of effect of one branch on another also implies that no observer will even be aware of any 'splitting' process."

(1957b), '"Relative State" Formulation of Quantum Mechanics', *Reviews of Modern Physics*, 29: 454-62; rept. In Wheeler and Zurek (1983: 318-23).

[14] Theoretical physicist Frank Tipler does not believe a quantum measurement can split the entire universe. According to Tipler's interpretation of Hugh Everett III's reinterpretation of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics: "Only the observed/observer system splits; only that restricted portion of the universe acted upon by the measurement operator *M* splits." Tipler does not believe the splitting process is endless: "Since the information stored in human beings is finite, the set of all possible measurements can split a human being into only a finite number of pieces." He estimates a human being can be split into approximately "2 raised to the 10^26 power" dispositions/substates. Clearly we're not in Kansas anymore.

(1986), 'The Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics in Quantum Cosmology', in Penrose and Isham (1986: 204-214).

[15] If all this talk of multiple selves seems counterintuitive to you, you're in good company. In the words of theoretical physicist Bryce DeWitt: "I still recall vividly the shock I experienced on first encountering this multi-world concept. The idea of 10^100+ slightly imperfect copies of oneself all constantly splitting into further copies, which ultimately become unrecognizable, is not easy to reconcile with common sense."

(1971), 'The Many-Universes Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics', in *Foundations of Quantum Mechanics*, International School of Physics: Enrico Fermi, Course IL (New York: Academic Press); rept. in DeWitt and Graham (1973: 167-218).

[16] Time is all in the mind. Better yet, time *is* the mind, just as you do not possess consciousness, you *are* consciousness. The human mind is a transtemporal field of awareness, transtemporal in the sense that a human mind has the power to re-experience/recreate the past (in the form of memories) as well as project/predict hypothetical experiences regarding the future.

[17] Quantum entanglement is the faster-than-light-speed relaying of information between particles. If particle A interacts with particle B their behavior will become correlated, and if particle A interacts with particle C sometime later, not only will particle A take on the new characteristics of particle C, but A will instantaneously transmit this new behavior (or information) to particle B, no matter how far apart they are! Einstein himself referred to this phenomenon as "spooky action at a distance." Although the particles may appear separate, their quantum states cannot be described independently from one another. For purposes relating to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, it is important to note that neurons communicate with other neurons via particles of light called biophotons, in addition to chemical signals and electrical currents. These photonic particles have no mass and travel at the speed of light. At the very least, electrical and photonic neural energy is associated with the workings of the mind, and at the very most, these energies in fact constitute the mind.

[18] You are quantumly entangled with all of the information that has ever come into contact with you (i.e., crossed your perceptual threshold). You are strongly correlated (in the quantum sense as well as the psychological sense) with your day-to-day environment, where you receive and relay the majority of your information. Your day-to-day environment is strongly correlated with the rest of the country, which is strongly correlated with the rest of the world, which is strongly correlated with the rest of the solar system, but beyond that the correlations grow weaker, as there is less informational interaction/influence. Information equals correlation, and it takes a long time for information to traverse the vast interstellar gulfs. All matter in the universe is presumably correlated to a slight degree through quantum entanglement, since all proto-matter was fused as one in the seed state before the Big Bang. Large-scale physical objects and events are not subject to the effects of quantum entanglement, but as I have already mentioned earlier in this section, the final moment of consciousness is governed by microphysical dynamics such as quantum superposition and hyperspatial entanglement, which are not beholden to the speed of light.

[19] How could time have a beginning and an end while also being infinite? For all intents and purposes time began with the Big Bang. But the Big Bang came from somewhere/something. If the universe ever stops expanding and begins to contract, it will eventually shrink to a state identical to that of its birth, reaching a point of infinite density, which some theorists have called the Big Crunch, upon which time (and space) will cease to be measurable for all intents and purposes, meaning time will end. But those who believe in the possibility of the Big Crunch also believe in the possibility of the Big Bounce, that the universe will explode forth again, setting time in motion anew. In this manner, time could be understood to have a beginning and an end while also continuing unto infinity.

Thus the issue dissolves under the tetralemma: It can be reasonably said that time has a beginning and an end. It can be reasonably said that time has no beginning and no end. It can be reasonably said that time does and does not have a beginning and an end.

[20] Our standard theories of reality and the mind do not, indeed cannot, provide a complete and accurate description of the subjects they intend to describe. Why does reality seem to behave according to one framework of interaction (classical physics) for large-scale phenomena, and an altogether different framework of interaction (quantum mechanics) for small-scale phenomena? Why does reality seem to behave one way when nobody is paying attention to it, and a different way when someone is observing it, as quantum measurements seem to indicate? The answer could only be *consciousness* (of a very specific type/mode).

The observational transformations of the collapsing/branching of the quantum wave function are instantaneous, happening faster than the speed of light. What mechanisms must already be in place for this to occur? Must there already be infinite variations of selves/universes at work, or are alternate outcomes manufactured right there on the spot? How else might we understand this process? Heisenberg doubted that the wave function represents a course of physical events in time and space, believing it only yields data regarding our *knowledge* of such events, whereas Schrodinger understood the wave function as representing *real, causal events*. How might they *both* be correct?

[21] Once a particular value or outcome for the universal wavefunction is determined/allotted, the resulting state is irreversible and will determine the entire future trajectory of that particular world/consciousness. But how are the different states parceled and pared down to the one you are currently experiencing? They aren't. You are experiencing all of them simultaneously, except in this particular world/consciousness you are experiencing this particular state.

[22] Consciousness is not reducible to brain states the way heat is reducible to the kinetic energy of atomic movement. Consciousness is simply defined here as the medium of experience, avoiding distinctions between mental and physical, internal and external, subjective and objective, mine and yours.

Whether or not consciousness goes into a state of superposition at the tail end of the dying brain process, it should be clear that the final transmission of experience is far more mysterious than turning off a light switch.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty:
The Many Names of Paradise

My friend Dave, an avowed atheist and lifelong cynic, phoned me a couple months ago to say: "I read your book halfway through, then I woke up in the middle of the night all freaked out. It terrified me, dude."

I had mixed feelings about this. I'm glad the work had a real impact. Death is a scary subject, possibly the scariest, but I wrote this book to soften its menacing aspect (although I must admit the musical number with Mephistopheles and Doctor Faustus is rather disturbing). The fear of death is socially conditioned. The primal fear of being painfully devoured by a predator is quite different from the more evolved fear of the cessation of personal identity, which is markedly different from the fear of eternal damnation. If you're an atheist and you've spent most of your life thinking there aren't any metaphysical repercussions for behaving poorly and squandering

your time here on this planet, you might indeed wake up terrified in the middle of the night after reading *The Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis.*

Here's what I told Dave: “Well, maybe that’s a good thing. If something convinces you there might be far-reaching consequences to abusing yourself and the world around you, and this revelation frightens you, that’s probably for the best. Anything that makes you stop and reassess yourself is a good thing, right?”

“But it feels like it’s too late,” said Dave. “I’ve been this way since I can remember. If your hypothesis turns out to be true, my afterlife is screwed. An eternity of watching television and working at a job I can’t stand!” It should be noted that Dave is a reclusive bachelor who recently retired from a job he never found fulfilling.

“Sure, your past will always be here with you in the present,” I said, “but I really do think it’s more about who you are now than where you were then. Sorry for the bumper sticker wisdom, but it’s never too late to adopt healthier habits and live a better life, regardless of your age or circumstances.” Don’t ask me which habits are healthier and what “living a better life” means. That can only be determined by each individual psyche and the type of afterlife experience they’re aiming for, i.e., Heaven (Judeo-Christian), Jannah (Islam), Nirvana (Buddhism), Sukhavati the Land of Bliss (Mahayana Buddhism), the Pure Lands (Mahayana Buddhism), Tian (Taoism and Confucianism), Patala (Hinduism and Buddhism), Goloka (Hinduism), Orun Rere (Yoruba), Aaru the Field of Reeds (Egyptian), the Elysian Fields (Greek), Tlālōcān (Aztec), Hanan Pacha (Inca), Tír na nÓg (Celtic), Valhalla (Norse), Fiddler’s Green (19th-century English maritime folklore), the Happy Hunting Grounds (Native American, although the term was coined by British colonizers), reincarnation into a higher being or better existence (Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, and Pythagoreanism), etcetera.

I talked to Dave again the other day. He said he’s been reading more and going for sunset walks along various beaches in Orange County. He even said he’s going to try “one of those dating apps.” I guess that’s something. Paradise is what we make of it.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-one:
Time to Initiate Eternity

[1] Considering the mechanics involved in the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, I suppose it would take a certain amount of time to initiate the experience of eternity. Physical processes take time. I think a few seconds would probably be long enough, but this is just my opinion, which is liable to change based on further research. This is an exploration, not a contestation. That being said…

[2] Here's a hypothetical breakdown of the dying process: The shock of imminent death excites neurons to synapse hyperactively, flooding our mind with a lifetime of memories. Then the restriction of oxygen elongates our sense of the passage of time and causes hallucinations of a very specific sort (similar to the experiences described while on ketamine). Next comes the neurochemical elixir of our nightly dreams, except augmented a hundredfold (resulting in

visions similar to those described while on DMT), transforming our overload of memories into something stranger, more magical, imbued with the unleashed chaos of our subconscious. All the while certain regions of the brain responsible for our sense of the passage of time (the frontal cortex, basal ganglia, parietal cortex, cerebellum, and hippocampus) are in progressive stages of shutting down, further elongating our experience of the moment. At this point we are moving at the speed of mind unbound by temporal or spatial considerations.

[3] A disturbing implication of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is that someone could (hypothetically) rob someone else of their afterlife experience.

[4] Someone caught in a sudden explosion might not have enough time to initiate the afterlife process.

[5] According to a strange article in the National Library of Medicine's archives, people who get their head chopped off with a guillotine are somewhat aware for three to six seconds afterward. I think that would be enough time to summon up eternity.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9930870/

[6] If you get shot in the head, depending on the areas of the brain that are damaged, you might not have a chance to experience the afterlife, but if you get shot in the heart, you'll have more than enough time to initiate your heaven or hell or wherever else someone may go.

[7] I think drowning would provide the time needed to activate the afterlife mechanics, as would strangulation. Falling to your death from a great height could go either way.

[8] Let's talk about being eaten by a great white shark. As its dagger teeth cut through you, extreme fear will trigger the release of adrenaline and your body's inborn painkillers, numbing you to the butchery. Then you will go into shock and black out, at which point the dying process is initiated. What sort of impact do you think such a violent sendoff will have on your experience of the afterlife? Cut off from pain, flooded in memories and visions, I believe you will be far removed from the shark currently devouring you.

[9] You might think dying peacefully in bed at a nursing home would ensure a smooth transition into the eidetic hereafter, but this probably isn't the case. Morphine, midazolam, and haloperidol are the most frequently prescribed painkillers for patients on their deathbed. All three of these drugs cause severe memory loss, interfering with both short-term and long-term memory. Take a moment to ponder how this might affect your experience of eternity. Managing pain during the final stage of life is important, but so is the devout Catholic's reward of heaven.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-two:
The Subjective Dream of Objectivity

I was recently asked if the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is an attempt to replace mainstream religion. “That wouldn’t make any sense,” I said. “The eidetic afterlife hypothesis isn’t a religion. It doesn’t address the most important religious concerns, although it might provide a skeleton key answer to the age-old question common among all spiritual systems: What happens when we die?”

The eidetic afterlife hypothesis doesn’t invalidate anyone’s concept of soul, including the atheist’s; neither does it challenge accepted notions of divinity. It simply doesn’t deal with these issues. Here’s a different way to look at it: God (whatever this term means to you) has ensured you a tailor-made afterlife, complete with a built-in system of morality (i.e., whatever you sow in life, so shall you reap upon death) to help guide you during your beforedeath. God

may have promised you an eternity in paradise for your good behavior, but God never told you exactly how this would come about!

Ponder this: What's the difference between objective eternity and the subjective experience of a moment that never ends? Perhaps it will help to rephrase the question: What's the difference between an objective view of reality (which we have never had access to) and the subjective experience of the world/cosmos in which we live (which is all we have ever had access to)? Do you feel that your existence has somehow been shortchanged by never having had an objective understanding of reality? Most likely the answer is no.

Do you liken eternity to an endless succession of days? That's just your mortal perspective framing the concept. Infinite degrees of separation (picoseconds, femtoseconds, attoseconds, zeptoseconds, yoctoseconds, rontoseconds, quectoseconds, etcetera) exist between any nanosecond and its immediate successor.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-three:
The Quantum Immortality Thought Experiment and the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis

[1] The Quantum Immortality Thought Experiment (which is completely different from the eidetic afterlife hypothesis) is an outgrowth of the Many-Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, proposed by Hugh Everett III in 1957. In the Many-Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, the universal wavefunction branches into multiple worlds, obtaining a measurement for every possible outcome (i.e., obtaining an outcome for every possible world involved in the measurement), as opposed to the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, which interprets multiple (equally realizable) outcomes of the wavefunction as collapsing randomly into a single event or measurement. The Quantum Immortality Thought Experiment goes something like this: In any event where your chances of survival are 50%, you will branch into both outcomes, meaning one version of you will die and one version of you will live. Since you cannot experience the version of you that is dead, you will only experience the

version of you that lives. And thus you will seem to have luckily survived the potentially deadly scenario. If you were playing a game of Russian Roulette, no matter how many times you pulled the trigger, you would never actually experience blowing your brains out, even though you will have killed many versions of you.

[2] The Quantum Immortality Thought Experiment fails to take into account the otherworldly quality of the transitional experience; i.e., it fails to account for the afterlife. Dying occurs most often as a continuum of deteriorating brain states which alters one's experience of consciousness, as opposed to a binary event such as when you put a gun to your head during a game of Russian Roulette and pull the trigger, in which case one second later you will either be alive or dead. According to the Quantum Immortality Thought Experiment, the quantum mechanical branching process is initiated in the large-scale arena of physics—the scale of hands and guns and brains. While this may indeed be the case (because the Many-Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics can get quite strange), it seems more plausible for the branching process to occur at the smallest scale of physics, the Planck scale, at the utmost limit of mind and reality.

[3] At the very end of the dying process, your consciousness… your mind… you… will be in a state of superposition, where you are simultaneously conscious, nonconscious, both conscious and nonconscious, and neither conscious nor nonconscious. Your mind isn't capable of imagining what this experience would be like.

[4] The strength of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is that it involves tangible components with identifiable relationships which can be studied and pondered. It makes more sense than other conceptions of the afterlife. Its weakness is that perhaps it makes too much sense. It seems to have an answer for everything, just like the most engaging conspiracy theories.

[5] The main social benefit of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is also its main offense: It equalizes afterlives, considering Elysium to be just as real and important to the ancient Greeks as heaven is to modern-day Christians. Neither is the true conception of the Great Beyond, or should I say both are true conceptions of the Great Beyond. All forms of paradise share one trait: an absence of suffering and pain. All forms of perdition share one trait: an exaggeration of suffering and pain.

[6] The eidetic afterlife hypothesis is dangerous. It manages to piss off every side of the religious debate. It drags atheists and agnostics into an afterlife of repercussions (without providing any sort of comforting faith or proof of the existence of a caring divinity), and it puts every religious conception of the hereafter on equal footing.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-four:
A Philosophical Overview of Time

Since temporal mechanics play a crucial role in the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, I felt it would be appropriate to devote a section of notes to the subject of time itself. The following is a comprehensive distillation of the various movements and observations concerning the multifaceted field of chronometry. Many of these views are mutually exclusive. Ideally, you should take a moment to ponder each enumeration.

1. Time is movement.

2. Time is change.

3. Time is consciousness.

4. Time is memory.

5. Time is the subjective experience of being alive.

6. Time is the cycle of the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars, and the attendant changing of the seasons.

7. Clock time is the manmade system of external-world chronometrical increments denoting the sequential permutation of objects and their interrelationships.

8. Time is the range of actions bound by the speed of light (299,792,458 meters per second in a vacuum).

9. Time is any event that occurs above Planck time (5.391247 × 10^-44 seconds) and Planck length (1.6 x 10-35 meters).

10. According to the International Bureau of Weights and Measures: "One second is the duration of 9,192,631,770 oscillations of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the cesium 133 atom at rest at a temperature of 0 Kelvin."

11. The speed of sound is approximately 343 meters per second at normal room temperature.

12. Thoughts travel in the human brain at speeds of up to 120 meters per second. However, the experience of the speed of thought feels instantaneous. For example, if I ask you to picture a certain animal when I mention its name, and then I say the word *elephant*, most likely you will have pictured the animal before I have even finished uttering the word.

13. Time is the space in which interactions occur.

14. Time is the four-dimensional medium of interaction for three-dimensional objects and spaces. Time is the fourth dimension.

15. Time is a wave. Time is vibratory. Objects vibrate with temporal energies. This vibrational aspect allows the prehension of events and entities.

"...music is a product of various auditory resonances (in rhythm, pitch and timbre, for example) amongst the parts of the active orchestra. Analogously the [re-entrant oscillatory multiplexing neurodynamical] model formalizes the idea that coherent mental representations and experience is the product of various resonances (i.e. multiplexing) between the phases, frequencies and amplitude parameters... of reciprocally connected information-processing (i.e. re-entrant) brain circuits."--Matthew Piper

16. Time is the fractal unfolding of self-reflective repetitions that accrue novel differences with every successive iteration.

17. Time is the gradual increase of entropy. When entropy is in its maximum state, time ceases. The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that the net entropy of a closed system can only increase.

18. Time is the gradual stilling of all entropy. When entropy is in its minimum state, time ceases.

19. Time is the one-directional (causally forward) experience of movement and decay.

20. Time is a linear progression of events.

21. Time is a cyclical progression of events.

22. Time is a linguistic system of categorization consisting of past, present, and future tenses.

23. Time is a translational system of experience based on perceptions of the present moment, memories of the past, and expectations of the future.

"What now is clear and plain is, that neither things to come nor past are [real]. Nor is it properly said, 'there be three times, past, present and to come.' Yet perchance it might be properly said, 'There be three times: a present of things past [memory], a present of things present [perception], and a present of things future [expectation].'" --Augustine of Hippo

24. Time is the conceptual medium by which one may transcend present circumstances and live in the past (as in the case of nostalgia) or the future (as in the case of worrying) or heaven (as in the case of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis).

25. Time is an illusion. Past and future do not exist. There is only now. Every memory is made in the now and experienced in the now.

26. You never experience the actual present because it takes a certain amount of time to process your perceptions.

27. Time is the binary concept of "earlier than" and "later than."

28. Time is a byproduct of the Big Bang's momentum.

29. Time is a lack of universal equilibrium. If the universe was completely stabilized, there would be no sense of time.

30. Time is a fluidic whole which humans separate into specific instances.

31. Time is the continuation of personal identity from one moment (action/event) to the next.

32. Time is a roiling chaos of manifestation and disintegration.

33. Physical time is the ceaseless addition of new information. Mental time is the ceaseless addition of new information to prior memories.

34. Time is not absolute. There is no universal timeframe. Time is relative. A clock will run faster or slower depending on its position in a gravitational field, and clock time appears to dilate for an object approaching the speed of light compared to the clock time of a stationary observer. But is clock time equivalent to time itself? Take a moment to think about this in relation to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis.

35. Time is logically reversible in the realm of mathematics.

36. Events at the fundamental level of the quantum substrate do not appear to possess any sort of temporal framework.

37. Time determines matter, and matter determines space. Take a moment to ponder this.

38. Time is the phenomenological byproduct of quantum decoherence.

39. The God's-eye view of time is an unchanging and boundless totality, never starting, never ending, incapable of being separated into this or that timeframe, viewing the whole picture of everything that will ever be.

40. If space exists, then only movement and the erosion arising from friction exist, therefore time is a fiction. But if time exists, then only the ubiquitous process of transformation exists, therefore space is a fiction.

41. Time is the process by which space unfolds into novel configurations; time is the expression of reality's creativity.

42. The past is unchangeable, and whatever will happen in the future is unavoidable. This understanding of time is known as fatalism.

43. Time consists of multiple (possibly infinite) time streams, each of which is isolated from the others.

44. The endurantist view of time considers material objects and entities to simultaneously exist in the past, the present, and the future. Objects and entities are viewed as the continual transformation of events going from the future to the present and into the past. The past and

future are physically real, meaning there are simultaneous multiplicities of objects and entities with the same identity.

45. Entities are not just spatially extended, they are also temporally extended. The complete view of the rose includes its budding, its blossoming, and its withered conclusion. All of these stages considered together are the actual rose, though the rose is never wholly present at more than one time.

46. Even if you see the decaying rose and it reminds you of the roses at your father's funeral (a past experience), which makes you feel sad (a present experience) and worried that you might die prematurely if you do not curb your smoking habit (a future experience), you are still only experiencing a single instance of time.

47. The Moving Spotlight metaphor: consciousness is like a spotlight sliding along the unified manifold of spacetime, where past, present, and future are all equally real, but consciousness can only shine the light of present awareness on one area during any given moment.

48. Time is the illusion of uninterrupted flow mentally projected onto a succession of events with slight gaps between them, but experience is unable to experience gaps in experience, just as your eyes are not aware of their blind spots.

49. Is there such a thing as a moment in time that cannot be subdivided any further? Mathematically, no. Experientially, yes.

50. The present consists of every experiential relation that factors into the immediate perception of this sentence.

51. There are two present moments that follow in close succession. The first is the moment of perception at the threshold of awareness. The second is the moment of translating the perception into meaningful experience.

52. The experience of time arises from a continuous succession of static conscious states, similar to how movies are composed of still images moving rapidly. The states (or instances of experience, or episodes) are non-overlapping, and each has an approximate duration of 100 milliseconds. The episodes themselves are likely framed within larger episodic sequences of thematically unified experience/information.

53. Let's suppose the window of experiencing a duration is approximately 100 milliseconds. Normally only a very limited amount of information can occupy this window, but this would not be the case during the "total life recall" moment that occurs during the dying brain process, when the brain is hyperactively synapsing. In this hyper-synaptic state, brief events would be experienced as considerably longer periods of present time than the duration they actually occupy.

"Duration is essentially a continuation of what no longer exists into what does exist." --Henri Bergson

54. Time is the duration allotted for any action or event (including thought) to occur. Different states of consciousness produce different experiences of duration.

55. Time entails a boundless variety of psychological modes regarding the experience of duration. The passage of time takes on certain characters (or spirits) based on one's general existential orientation. For instance, preliterate humans living in a tribal state of nature tend to equate their time with survival, hence their spirit of time is creative and improvisational. Monks and nuns living in a monastery tend to equate their time with prayer and penance, hence time itself takes on a spiritual character. Businessmen living in big cities tend to equate their time with money, hence there is never enough time, and the underlying character of their passing days gravitates toward disingenuousness.

56. Time is more than the succession of experiences--time is the experience of succession.

57. We are able to experience the succession of time because that is how time presents itself to our perceptions.

58. The past is always intermingling with the present, in the form of memories, with the strongest memories associated with the most recent perceptions, thus enabling you to read the letters in this sentence or listen to successive notes form a coherent tune.

"The unit of composition of our perception of time is a duration, with a bow and a stern, as it were—a rearward—and a forward-looking end. It is only as parts of this duration-block that the relation of succession of one end to the other is perceived. We do not first feel one end and then feel the other after it, and from the perception of the succession infer an interval of time between, but we seem to feel the interval of time as a whole, with its two ends embedded in it." --William James

59. Simply put, time is seeing the green light become the yellow light while retaining the memory of the green light and expecting to see the red light follow shortly, all the while being subjected to the memory of what green, yellow, and red lights mean.

60. Time is an inborn sense of transitioning. Time and consciousness and change are three words denoting different explanatory angles of the same phenomenon.

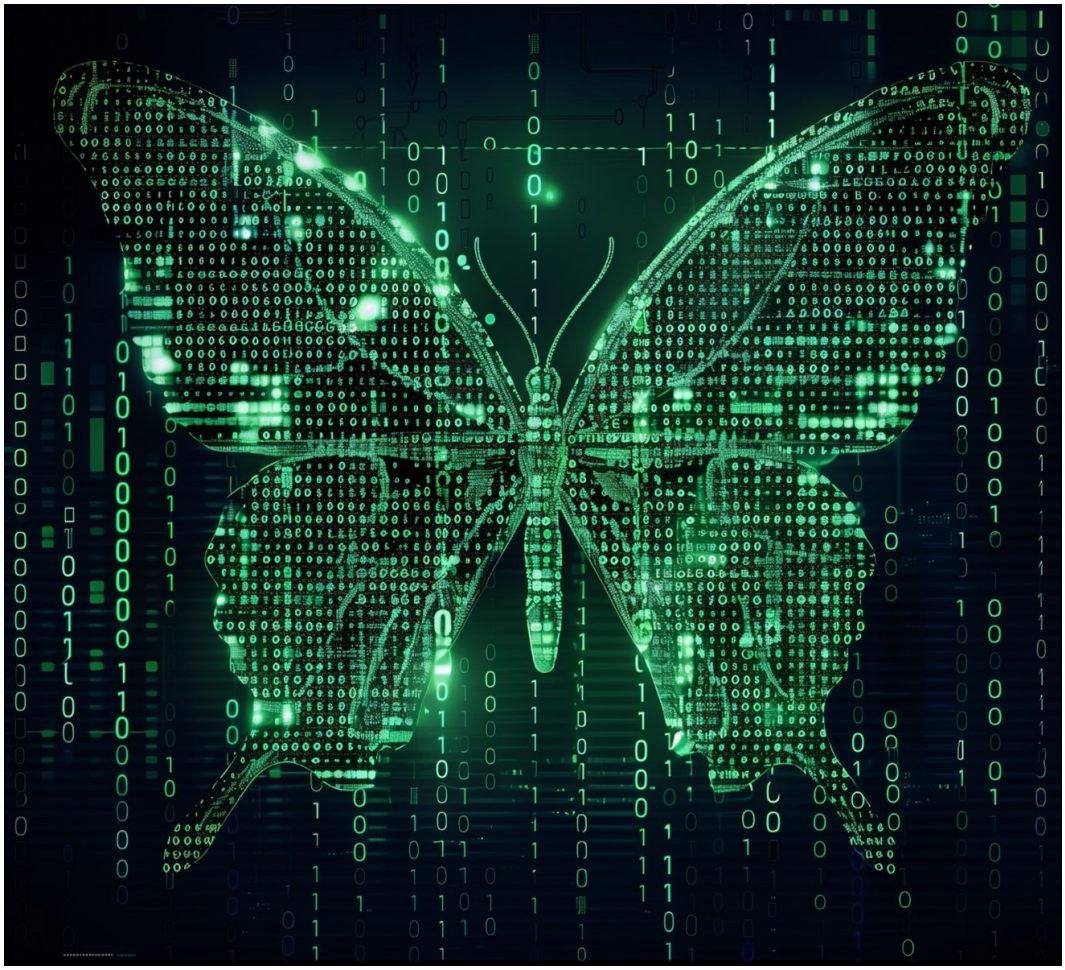
61. Our sense of time is codependent on the oscillations of various neural processes. Some of these oscillations are extremely brief, and some extend over the course of a lifetime. These oscillations are slow cortical pulses—low frequency waves of neural activity—that unify stimuli throughout the brain.

62. We process time in at least two distinct manners, involving different areas of the brain: The first way we process time is through neural wave oscillations (generally applied to events at shorter timescales). The second way we process time is through the mental mirroring of experiential sequences of events (generally applied to events at longer timescales).

63. Your consciousness does not interpret sequences of events any more than a mirror interprets imagery. But mental processes do take time to translate perceptions. And while you might dismiss the redness of the red shirt you see yourself wearing in the mirror as an outcome of perceptual processes, the fact that the mirror reflects is undeniable.

In conclusion, one camp argues that the mind creates time, while the other camp argues that time creates the mind. Another camp argues that time is a continuous uninterrupted flow of consciousness, while its neighboring camp argues that time is parceled in discreet episodes of experience. Might they all be right?

If you made it all the way to the end of this lengthy section of notes, congratulations! You have successfully passed this crash course on the subject of time, and are now a novice chronometrician!



Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-five:
Collective Consciousness and the Living Universe

[1]
The human mind is a transtemporal field of awareness, transtemporal in the sense that a human mind has the power to intentionally re-experience/recreate the past (in the form of memories) as well as project/predict hypothetical experiences regarding the future.

[2]
The transtemporal field of awareness we call *mind* extends as far as all of human experience, but individual humans may only partake in the tiny portion they happen to experience for themselves.

[3]
Ultimately we all share the same transtemporal field of awareness. We all partake from the same well, so we should strive not to poison it any further.

[4]
We can only unlock conscious experience through objects (and our imaginative abstraction of them), which confines us to experiencing consciousness in a linear manner.

[5]
If we all share the same mind, it would be sensible to work toward one of two goals:

A) We want what is best for ourselves, meaning what is best for everyone, so we work to create equality.

B) We want what is best for ourselves, meaning our particular mindset, so we work to eradicate every mindset that differs from ours.

Goal *A* evolves toward an adaptable mental resource base. Goal *B* evolves toward a non-adaptable mental resource base.

The survival of a species is generally based on its ability to adapt.

[6]
The difficulty in reducing the mind to identifiable brain states and neurochemical patterns comes from the fact that our conception/understanding of the mind is irreparably flawed. The mind is not what we think it is, and it is not *where* we commonly think it is. The mind is not located in the heart, as the ancient Egyptians once thought, and the mind is not located "in" the brain, as we've assumed for thousands of years. You are a channel for beliefs and desires. Beliefs are roles any person may incorporate into their ongoing pattern of behavior. Beliefs are not specific to the person holding them. At any given moment, you are simply a combination of beliefs.

[7]
You only perceive the reality presented to you. The content of your mind depends on the context of your surroundings. Your awareness of any given environment is, for the most part, what constitutes your mind. Hence, incomplete understanding must always be the case.

[8]
Reality is not only a concept—*reality is concept*. Reality at its most fundamental level is pure conceptuality.

[9]
Your mind is not hiding somewhere
between your ears.

Your mind isn't even yours.
We're all sharing it.

But like most things that can be shared,
some want it all for themselves.

[10]
Your mind is not something in your head. Rather, your head is something in your mind. But is it really *in* your mind? And is it really *your* mind?

[11]
In 1928, Edward Bernays, American pioneer of propaganda, published his seminal work, *Propaganda*, in which he argues that public relations plays a crucial role in establishing/maintaining societal order. Here is an excerpt from the book: "The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, and our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of… it is they who pull the wires that control the public mind."

[12]
On average, there are sixteen minutes of commercials for every hour of programming. The average child spends an average of six hours per day watching television, exposing them to ninety-six minutes of commercials every day. This means the average child has spent well over five thousand hours downloading consumerist propaganda into his or her receptive brain by the time they are ten years of age—well over five thousand hours of deceptive demoralizing advertising tactics drilled into their defenseless minds during the formative years, and this is only the commercials, to say nothing of the dubious content of the programs they are watching *between* the commercials.

[13]
The Psychic War

There's a psychic war,
it's been going on
for about a hundred years.
You've probably never heard of it,
which means they're winning.

It's being waged
through weapons of mass distraction
and weapons of mass division
and weapons of mass discouragement
and weapons of mass dismissal,
and it's about to get worse,
much worse.

Tinfoil hats aren't enough anymore.
We must don tinfoil suits of armor.

[14]
Mediatized

I want you to listen to what I'm saying.
Really listen.
How can I take your mind?

I repeat, how can I take your mind?

You probably don't realize it, but
I have just taken your mind.
It's mine now.

I want you to imagine a green gorilla.
Seriously, imagine a green gorilla.

Even if you resist my command,
you'll only be struggling not to see
a green gorilla.

Do you understand?
This is how they get you, buy you, sell you.

You are the price of your attention.

These words are not in your mind.
These words *are* your mind,
at least for right now.

Green gorillas don't exist,
yet now they do, to me and you,
whether true or not.

Here, take your mind back.
Go give it to some other stranger.

[15]
The "brain in a vat" argument asks you to imagine yourself as a disembodied brain floating in a vat of nutrients, with your nerve endings connected to a supercomputer that simulates every aspect of sensory perception. How would this scenario affect your concepts of reality, world, body, identity, knowledge, and truth? How do you know you aren't a brain in a vat?

[16]
I am, in fact, a brain in a vat, my head/body serving as the vat, or if you prefer, the entire universe (not to mention the possibility that this is all a computer simulation, or God's dream). I am a thing that represents, enveloped in that which presents. Whether the vat presents illusions or I create them through perception is inconsequential. Either way, I am presented with a deceptively limited amount of tailor-made data regarding my situation at any given moment.

A mind in a universe is like a brain in a vat.
A mind in a society is like a brain in a vat.
A mind in a brain is like a brain in a vat.

The brain is mind.
The vat is mind.
Only mind is not mind.

[17]
What if this is all a very advanced simulation? What would it mean to be *alive* in a computer simulation? What would it mean to be *conscious* in a computer simulation? Wouldn't our consciousness be coming from the computer itself? Wouldn't our consciousness be an attribute of the computer?

[18]
Nothing would really change if everything were revealed to be a hallucination/simulation. Utterances would still sound like utterances. Tactile sensations would still feel like tactile sensations. You would still be you, virtual as always. And what difference would it make if the hallucination/simulation were collectively shared or confined to you individually? Interactions with others would still be perceived as interactions with others. The only difference being that, in the case of an individualized hallucination/simulation, you might be motivated to adjust your habit of thinking others are distinct from you (i.e., distinct from your representation of them), which you should be doing regardless.

[19]
If I can question reality, there must be a reality to question. Unlike the possibility that I do not exist, the possibility of me being a hallucination/simulation is not incompatible with my entertaining the thought that I am a hallucination/simulation.

[20]
If meaning is reliant on the perception/recognition of objects, events, and words, then meanings aren't inside one's brain. If meanings aren't inside one's brain, it would follow that beliefs and desires aren't either. Meanings are the way you train your senses to process information, with the boundary between internal and external wavering eidetic as a soap bubble. Perceptions are not introduced to the mind—perceptions *are* the mind. You will

invariably misconstrue the ultimately mysterious object before you, but you will never misconstrue your thoughts regarding the ultimately mysterious object.

[21]
The “deepest mysteries of reality” are eidetic. Everything in reality is deeply mysterious, but only to us. The fundamental nature of an apple is unknowable, yet its sweetness is immediately available, and its nourishment. The “fundamental nature” of anything is an eidetic maze.

[22]
Matter is the eidetic* code for experience. Matter has the power to manifest experience. Matter *is* experience.

*In the sense of the third definition for the term *eidetic*: pertaining to a mode of interpretation in which matter and mind are understood to be ultimately indistinguishable.

[23]
Countless forms/expressions of matter have inherently psychoactive properties if touched, inhaled or ingested. What if all matter were psychedelic to a degree? Matter has field properties (i.e., all particles of matter exhibit wave-like behavior) that transmit psychoactive signals to our brain/senses. The observable universe does more than provide the capacity for perception—the observable universe *is* the capacity for perception, and therefore agency. Mentality is a property of the universal superorganism, just as mentality is not confined to neurons but rather the whole entity/context to which the neurons belong.

[24]
Everything is sending signals to you. Everything is in communication with you. Everything is talking to you. There is nothing mystical about this statement.

[25]
Certain events are described in terms of physical causality, and certain events are described in terms of mental causality. The events are real, the descriptions are eidetic (in the sense of the second definition for the term *eidetic*: an illusion or hallucination so realistic it fools one’s senses and intellect). The senses are a means of translating reality, and language is a means of translating the senses, and there are always subtle nuances that get lost in translation.

[26]
Consciousness began with the Big Bang. Take a moment to ponder this.

[27]
Consciousness itself is a psychological construct. We believe it exists even though we cannot measure or isolate it. So where is consciousness? It seems to be everywhere. All the mysterious gods and goddesses themselves are easier to fathom than consciousness.

[28]
“Consciousness” and “reality” are two words for the same experience.

[29]
“Consciousness... does not appear to itself chopped up into bits... a ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described... as the brain changes are continuous so do all these consciousnesses melt into each other like dissolving views. Properly they are but one protracted consciousness, one unbroken stream.”
—pragmatist philosopher William James

Eidetic hodology takes James’ notion of consciousness a step further, understanding all occasions and incarnations of consciousness to arise from “one protracted consciousness, one unbroken stream.” Consciousness is more than what you think and feel. Consciousness is the background of existence, and perception is the foreground of consciousness. Consciousness is neither internal nor external. All is consciousness.

[30]
Is your consciousness experiencing these words, or are *you* experiencing these words? You don’t possess consciousness; you *are* consciousness.

[31]
The phrase “altered state of consciousness” implies there is a “normal” state of consciousness, but consciousness is in a continuous state of alteration. What is consciousness if not a perceivable alteration of states? With every breath, consciousness is subject to being altered by: hallucinations, illusions, dreams (including the hypnagogic and hypnopompic varieties), hypnosis, trances, music, meditation, concentration, new information, old information, marketing strategies, social conditioning, and emotions.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-six:
The Deities We Birth

1.
This section of notes is not about God with a capital G, otherwise known as the Creator of the Universe. This section of notes is about the attributes of ourselves we give divine and infernal names to. Any mention of gods or goddesses in this context is somewhat arbitrary, as such spirits have no real sex or gender. The spirit of mercy may be found in one culture to have masculine traits, while the neighboring culture portrays the same spirit with feminine traits.

2.
For better or for worse, the collective will of humanity forms the spirit of god, or perhaps it's more accurate to say the collective will of humanity manifests as the spirit of god. What sort of divinity are we collectively manifesting throughout the world? Is it a divinity of compassion and

forgiveness, or knowledge and wisdom, or love and beauty? More often it's a spirit of anger and vengeance, or greed and dishonesty, or lust, or vanity, or the god of war.

3.
We unwittingly worship many gods and goddesses throughout any given day, collectively empowering many different spirits.

4.
Spirits are ideas and associated behaviors. Spirits don't have their own bodies, but they take possession of minds, effectively giving them control of other people's bodies, through which they take on a life of their own.

5.
Far too many Christians pray to Jesus, their embodiment of love and compassion, while in their hearts they secretly (and oftentimes unknowingly) worship the spirit of hatred and death.

6.
Your actions reflect who you really worship. Every action is a form of worship, subtly manifesting/reinforcing your beliefs. Ponder this, how many minutes throughout any given day do you devote to love and compassion, and how many minutes throughout any given day are devoted to worshipping the god of greed and dishonesty, or the goddess of lust, or the spirit of strife?

7.
What sort of divine author have I inherited from my family and society? Is my author the same as your author? Is it the loving Jehovah whose invisible penmanship is argued to have wrought the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of our salvation, or is it that callous Yahweh, surprising us with pop quizzes and tests of loyalty in a heavy-handed effort to edit and revise our souls? Could it be some Lovecraftian nightmare of the subconscious, manipulating us just behind the veil of our dimensionality to wreak havoc upon our life stories, delighting in our pain, feeding off our suffering, or is it some sort of minimal realist like Raymond Carver, hiding his hand as best he can, allowing us our foibles and fables undoctored?

8.
You cannot rely on those who are unjust to manifest the god of justice. They will only summon unholy perversions.

9.
Sorry to burst your bubble, but we are responsible for god. We are all responsible for the divine. You want a better world? Manifest better world-spirits. Unite in manifesting the god(s) and/or goddess(es) you want to govern the soul of your societies. Be the divinity you wish to see in the world. Otherwise you leave the world to devils and demons and despots.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-seven:
The Argument

The other day I was called a conspiracy theorist for trying to discuss the dying brain process (and the attendant afterlife experience) using recent medical, scientific, and psychological research. The irony is that it was a Catholic priest who did the name-calling. If anyone should be accused of creating a conspiracy surrounding death and the dying process, it should be the Catholic Church!

The eidetic afterlife hypothesis does not reduce the afterlife to a mere dream or hallucination, as critics often try to assert. I tend to think of the afterlife as a wondrous otherworldly experience (or transition into a radically different form of consciousness) that can only be accessed by a particular combination of physiological events that occur during the dying brain process.

The argument isn't terribly complex:

1) Q: What happens when oxygen is restricted to the brain? A: An alteration of the experience of time, feelings of euphoria, visions of tunnels and other hallucinatory images.

Near-death visions of a tunnel of light and feelings of euphoria can be attributed to carbon dioxide retention, known as hypoxia (reduced oxygen to the brain) or anoxia (complete absence of oxygen in the brain). In the 2002 British Broadcasting Corporation documentary, *The Day I Died: The Mind, the Brain, and Near-Death Experiences*, British psychophysiologist Susan Blackmore explains: "The tunnel, for example, seems very clear how and why you get these dark tunnels with the bright light at the end. We know how the cells in the visual system are laid out. Right from the retina and the back of the eye, all the way through the visual system to the visual cortex at the back of your brain here [pointing], there are lots of cells devoted to the middle of the visual field—what you are looking at—and very few devoted towards the outside. Now, what happens when you go into severe shock, when you have lack of oxygen, is all the cells start firing randomly. Now, what's that going to look like? With lots of cells devoted towards the middle and very few towards the outside, it's going to look like bright light in the middle, dark towards the outside. Now, you are nearly unconscious with your eyes shut, and this is all you can see, so it feels like going forwards through a tunnel into a bright light."

"Another thing that we understand pretty well is the emotional effects [of oxygen deprivation]," continues Susan, "because under stress and with shock and lack of oxygen (such as in a state of hypoxia or anoxia), you get a massive flood of endorphins, the brain's own morphine-like chemicals, especially dopamine, which has the effect of taking away pain, making you feel everything is absolutely fine, giving you a very positive attitude towards everything."

https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc948094/m2/1/high_res_d/34-1%205.%20Holden%20cx%202018.pdf?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0w6Zjwsu8c5pvx5rBXgysrd8-8sokDQCIIP8VF9jlJrmgujqyUYfdVgxo_aem_m7O2J2JZHgQR8Othi2BdOA

2) Q: What role do neurotransmitters play in the dying brain process? A: Serotonin is a neurochemical related to dreams and hallucinations. Serotonin levels have been observed to increase threefold during the dying brain process.

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0304394011005234?fbclid=IwY2xjawMp-X1leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHTl9NSK8JMKXqeG6RT8VdpF9JwJDl3MAZwwEQ9ARmofrNaKZ-2KVdqBpVw_aem_F9OjhCem6jesURojpLV7sw#:~:text=Extracellular%20levels%20of%20serotonin%2C%20one,zero%2Dline%20of%20no%20activity

Endogenous DMT has also been observed to be released during the dying brain process, along with massive surges of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with euphoria, and acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter associated with memory. All of these neurochemicals (serotonin, dopamine, acetylcholine, and endogenous DMT) combine during the dying brain process to form the gateway to your afterlife experience.

3) Q: If thought and memory processes are connected to neural synapses, what is going on during the hyperactive synaptic activity witnessed during the final moments of the dying process? A: Gamma waves (associated with conscious thought) have been observed during the dying brain process to spike to a level three hundred times more active than in normal (non-dying) brains. [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part four]

https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/3982026-human-brains-show-larger-than-life-activity-at-moment-of-death/?fbclid=IwY2xjawMp-cNleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHfHFS51BW0huhRbZtthpwQ-VZz-bzRlgiJH6fuQo_Ze-Yk9Vao9FBxYmSQ_aem_snHvy4eD2xRR_RkxeUtE9w#:~:text=Many%20of%20Strassman's%20hypotheses%20%E2%80%94%20including,the%20mainstream%20understanding%20of%20medicine

4) Q: If certain regions of the brain are responsible for our sense of duration, what happens to our experience of time when those regions start to malfunction and shut down? A: Your sense of the span of a second will significantly change. [see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part six and part nineteen]

5) Q: What sort of experience would arise from all of these things happening at once? A: Something akin to an afterlife. Note: All of these things occur necessarily during the dying brain process. Could all of these things happening simultaneously be construed as a mere dream or hallucination? No. The experience of all these factors occurring at once would be something vastly different from a dream or hallucination.

Recap: As the brain undergoes the dying process, certain neurochemicals responsible for dreams and hallucinations (as well as our *everyday experience*) are augmented and fused with a hyperactive excitation of neural synapses, particularly of the sort associated with memories, adding to this the effects of restricting oxygen to the brain, and also adding to this the effects of shutting down certain regions of the brain responsible for experiencing time and duration… this is certainly far different from a dream or hallucination, but people willfully misunderstand or trivialize whatever (or whomever) they wish to dismiss.

As far as hallucinations and illusions are concerned, your whole life has been lived in an illusion, of sorts. At all moments, you are experiencing a subjective version of reality that is tailor-made by evolution, sensory perceptions, geography, history, and socioeconomics for your continued survival and well-being. You do not see the atoms all around you, nor the ultraviolet wavelength, and you unknowingly project your feelings and beliefs onto others constantly. You indeed live in your own little world, or version of reality, or hallucination. Call it whatever you choose, the gist is still the same.

Reality is generally whatever is presented to you that you accept as “real.” Some people believe in aliens, others believe in ghosts, and still others believe in angels and lizard people and global conspiracy theories. What’s real? Evolution? The Big Bang Theory? Whatever we accept as real

will definitely have a real effect on our everyday actions and behavior. And whatever we *don't* accept as real will likewise have an effect.

The eidetic afterlife hypothesis introduces a liminal state between life and death, a mysterious twilight state, where you are technically beyond what we normally consider as alive. As evidence continues to mount, the hypothesis is beginning to take on the aspect of a theory.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-eight:
Near-Death Biophysics and the Eidetic Experiential Relativistic Infinity Equation (EERIE)

Outer-world time cannot be experienced without inner-world time. The physiological seat of our inner clock is a network of brain regions (frontal cortex, parietal cortex, cerebellum, hippocampus, basal ganglia, etc.), each responsible for parsing temporal intervals ranging from milliseconds to minutes, hours, and days [1]. As these systems fail and shut down during the dying brain process, time loses its structure, resulting in temporal dilation, a phenomenon intensified by synaptic hyperactivity during the "wave of death." As different parts of the brain degrade**,** each related to different timescales of perception, the subject experiences:

1. Elongated durations (e.g., milliseconds in the eidetic afterlife feel significantly longer than milliseconds in the waking world).

2. Non-linear progression (e.g., past, present, and imagined futures blend).

Parallels between regular dream time and time as experienced in the eidetic afterlife:

1. Both detach from physical body-based pacing (e.g., muscle movement).

2. Both exaggerate or shrink perceived durations.

3. Both arise from internal constructions, not external stimuli.

In dreams, minutes can feel like hours or even years. In the eidetic afterlife, your final second can feel like forever. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis offers a compelling reinterpretation of the afterlife—not as a place, but as **an augmented form of consciousness experiencing a state of infinite duration born from the collapse of time itself!**

During the hyper-synaptic phase of the dying brain process:

1. Every neuron is closer to firing information (due to the raised resting potential) [2].

2. Inhibitory and excitatory balance breaks down, allowing significantly greater volumes of information flow [3].

3. Old and damaged pathways reroute to create novel connections (e.g., terminal lucidity).

4. Dreamlike processing takes over, but without constraints of linear time or external sensory input.

5. World-modeling prediction machinery transitions to running solely on belief and inner models, not external data, making experience more symbolic and expansive.

These changes mean the rate at which meaningful moments occur is dramatically amplified, creating the illusion (or reality) of expanded time.

The dying brain experiences a massive, simultaneous release of neurotransmitters—endorphins [4], dopamine [5], serotonin [6], acetylcholine [7], glutamate [8], noradrenaline [9], adrenaline [10], and possibly endogenous DMT [11]. This biochemical flood creates a convergence of conditions that:

1. Elevate perceptual vividness (via serotonin and acetylcholine)

2. Suppress pain and increase euphoria (via endorphins and dopamine)

3. Enhance focus and alertness (via noradrenaline and adrenaline)

4. Boost learning and memory (via glutamate and acetylcholine)

5. Potentially induce mystical, ego-dissolving states (via endogenous DMT and abnormally high serotonin activation at 5-HT2A receptors).

This altered neurochemical state **detaches consciousness from typical linear temporality**, a critical requirement for temporal dilation as discussed in the eidetic afterlife hypothesis.

The Four Primary Factors of Temporal Dilation Manifesting As the Eidetic Afterlife:

1. **Oxygen Deprivation (Anoxia):** Anoxia disrupts temporal processing in the cortex, especially in the parietal lobes, which govern linear time perception. This leads to the subjective expansion of time, where seconds may stretch into lifetimes—analogous to the time-dilation effects reported during traumatic or psychedelic events.

2. **Neurochemical Flooding:** The simultaneous surge of neurotransmitters shifts the brain into a hyper-associative, hyper-lucid state, fundamentally different from dreaming or hallucinating. This neurochemical cocktail (referred to as *eidos*) creates the conditions for realistic timeless otherworldly experiences often reported in near-death or DMT-induced states.

3. **Massive Synaptic Excitation & Memory Retrieval:** Glutamate and acetylcholine work synergistically to activate memory circuits in the hippocampus and temporal lobes, facilitating (if not directly effecting) the widely reported “life review”. In the absence of time as a regulating force, the brain accesses past experiences non-sequentially.

4. **Shutdown of Time-Regulating Brain Regions:** As oxygen deprivation and neurotransmitter imbalance progresses, brain regions involved in temporal orientation and self-referential processing gradually go offline, resulting in the most dramatic aspect of temporal dilation.

This neurochemical and neurophysiological transformation doesn’t just create a vivid hallucination—it creates a new type of temporal architecture. The eidetic afterlife is neither a mystical vision, a hallucination, nor a dream, but a non-linear state of consciousness. The brain, in its final moments, enters a self-generating eidetic field—a richly detailed, internally consistent subjective world that **could seem to last forever** from the point of view of the dying person. Time slows not just psychologically, but neurobiologically and perhaps even quantum-consciously.

As the parietal and temporo-occipital junctions (responsible for body schema and spatial orientation) begin to shut down, a subjective detachment from the body occurs, often reported as an out-of-body experience (OBE) [12]. These OBEs are not just spatially disorienting but temporally unmoored—the self becomes untethered from linear time. The phenomenology of this state suggests a panoramic, non-linear awareness—the "life review" often reported in near-death experiences, where entire lifetimes are seemingly relived in a moment. In this state, the

final moments of life become asymptotically extended, meaning that subjective time expands infinitely even as objective time approaches zero. This is the culmination of temporal dilation: the dying brain enters a terminal feedback loop of recursive memory and imagination that creates the illusion—or reality—of eternity.

Einstein showed us that **time is not absolute**—it bends and stretches depending on your frame of reference. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis suggests the same holds true for the mind during the dying brain process. By substituting speed or gravitational curvature with neural entropy, neurochemical gradients, or cognitive decoupling, we can frame subjective time dilation in the dying brain mathematically analogous to relativistic dilation.

Einstein's special relativity posits that time slows down for an object or entity moving at high speeds relative to a stationary observer, and general relativity extends this to gravity—stronger gravitational fields slow time. These are objective, physical time dilations, measurable and real. Near the event horizon of a black hole, for example, time would appear to move infinitely slowly to a distant observer, while the falling observer would experience normal time locally.

Temporal dilation during the dying brain process is not physical in the Einsteinian sense—instead it is psychological, neurochemical, and eidetic (i.e., involving vividly reconstructed internal phenomena). However, here's the crucial parallel: In both Einsteinian relativity and the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, the experienced flow of time is relative to the frame of reference. In relativity the frame is physical (speed or gravity). In the eidetic afterlife the frame is neural, cognitive, and experiential, altered by hypoxia, psychotropic neuromodulators, disintegration of sensory input, and the gradual shutdown of various networks associated with apprehending the passage of time.

As external time cues fall away and the regions of the brain that are responsible for the sense of time's passage begin to deteriorate, the brain's internal model of time becomes disconnected from objective measurements. Subjective time becomes elastic, expanding into what seems like eternity, similar to how an observer might perceive a frozen image of someone falling into a black hole. At this point, psychological internal loops dominate, especially within the default mode network. Time, freed from the external clock, becomes infinitely dilatable in the brain's representational space.

The eidetic afterlife's relativistic mental dilation mirrors Einstein's relativistic physical dilation in three important ways:

1. Both treat time as relative, not absolute.

2. Both describe extreme conditions where time can stretch toward infinity.

3. Both depend on the observer's frame—whether physical (Einstein's model) or mental (Strangeweather's model).

The eidetic afterlife hypothesis transposes Einsteinian relativity from the cosmos to the cortex—describing the final phase of the dying brain process as a kind of internal spacetime singularity!

The Neurochemical Components of Temporal Dilation

When systemic oxygen and metabolic support collapse, the dying brain enters a cascade of disintegration that profoundly distorts subjective time. Neurons lose ATP, synaptic connectivity unravels, and high-order cortical circuits shut down first while more primitive midbrain and limbic structures linger. This progressive neural disintegration drastically alters the ordinary scaffolding of perception: thalamocortical loops collapse, the prefrontal "clock" regions falter, and coherent sensory integration fades. In effect, the temporal reference frame provided by active cortical networks is dismantled, allowing subjective time to stretch and splinter.

Electrophysiological studies suggest that just before death the brain briefly engages in paradoxical bursts of activity (hyper-synchrony of gamma waves and other oscillations) **even as overall function decays!** [13].

As neural integrity deteriorates, an overwhelming flood of neurochemicals erupts. Intense hypoxia and calcium influx trigger massive glutamate release and excitotoxic depolarization across cortical tissue. Subcortical arousal systems pour out noradrenaline, while the basal forebrain dumps acetylcholine into memory circuits. Dopaminergic nuclei and other neuromodulators surge—the dying brain essentially bathes in a cocktail of its own stimulants and hallucinogens. This psychotogenic storm can be summarized as follows:

1. **Glutamatergic surge:** Brain-wide excitatory drive spikes, creating a chaotic hyperexcited state.

2. **Acetylcholine and dopamine flood:** Neurotransmitters that normally regulate attention and reward flood cortical areas, intensely amplifying memory and emotional processing.

3. **Endogenous hallucinogens:** Compounds analogous to DMT and ketamine are formed internally, producing extremely vivid dreamlike imagery.

4. **Hormone and neuropeptide release:** Stress hormones and endogenous opioids (endorphins) are released, imparting euphoria or serenity.

Flooded with neuromodulators, the brain's mnemonic systems fire relentlessly. The hippocampus and associative cortices, bathed in acetylcholine, re-encode and retrieve vast swathes of stored information. A lifetime of episodic memories cascades into awareness as synapses fire at maximum capacity. In this memory overload phase, time itself seems to compress—every remembered scene plays out with full sensory detail as if happening in the present [14]. Key aspects include:

1. **Autobiographical replay:** Events across one's entire lifespan are recalled, often out of chronological order, blending youth, adulthood, and old age (if applicable).

2. **Semantic and procedural retainment:** Learned skills and language patterns remain, but they are subsumed into the vivid experiential montage.

3. **Synaptic hyperactivation:** The brain's usual networks of memory are overridden, allowing the retrieval of heretofore inaccessible memories.

The trope "life flashing before one's eyes" is a literal manifestation. Cognitive content floods the mind, and with the usual temporal markers gone, the entire narrative of a life can unfurl in mere seconds.

At this point, cognitive dereferencing takes hold. With external sensory input gone and the brain's internal timekeeping dismantled, consciousness disconnects from the outer world and merges fully with internal imagery. In practical terms, the dying mind loses the anchoring that ties experience to the physical environment. The individual's awareness is consumed by the relentless stream of recalled moments, and the normal sense of being an agent *in* time dissolves. This can be seen as:

1. **Loss of external context:** There is a point in the dying process where the brain receives no new external data, and internal events (like memory) cease to be set against a backdrop of "here and now."

2. **Immersion in memory-space:** Without a present frame of reference, each memory is phenomenally "real." The person is reliving past scenes rather than merely recalling them.

3. **Collapse of linear order:** With the mind untethered from clock time, temporal sequence becomes arbitrary. Past events may bleed into each other or repeat infinitely.

Throughout this process, the brain's **Default Mode Network (DMN)** plays a central role. The DMN mainly consists of the dorsal medial prefrontal cortex, posterior cingulate cortex, precuneus, and angular gyrus. Normally involved in self-referential thought, daydreaming, and memory consolidation, the DMN becomes the lone conductor of the eidetic show once other networks fail. As sensory cortices fade, the DMN is effectively isolated—it no longer juggles external tasks and instead exclusively weaves internal narratives. The DMN is known to remain active and even become hyper-synchronous during near-death or psychedelic states [15], especially when sensory input and external time cues are collapsing. This provides a strong neurobiological basis for how the brain might generate a vivid, seemingly infinite inner world during temporal dilation. Characteristics of DMN isolation include:

1. **Uninterrupted introspection:** The DMN enters into a deeply self-reflective state without inhibition or outside interference.

2. **Self as unwitting narrator/author:** Even as identity dissipates, a minimal sense of self persists through the DMN's autobiographical loop, tying together disparate memories while generating rich, spontaneous imagery and narrative content, effectively dreaming while awake.

3. **Spatial-temporal improvisation:** The DMN constructs scenes and sequences from memory fragments, giving structure to the otherwise chaotic internal experience.

In short, the DMN alone remains active to organize the flood of information into coherent inner experiences. Freed from reality-checking inputs, the DMN's narrative creates a vividly textured, self-consistent inner world. This is why accounts of near-death visions often include elaborate landscapes or encounters with symbolic figures—these are the byproducts of an isolated DMN interpreting raw memory and emotion as meaningful experience.

Relativistic Time Dilation and the Eidetic Afterlife

Near-death experiences often involve profound distortions of time and consciousness that echo Einstein's time dilation concept in special relativity. Observers who have almost died report leaving their bodies, seeing their lives flash before their eyes, and entering a realm beyond everyday existence, unconstrained by the usual boundaries of space and time. The eidetic afterlife hypothesis demystifies this experience, describing a hyper-dilation of dream time during the dying process, when certain regions of the brain responsible for our perception of temporal sequences begin to shut down. This suggests a neurological collapse or intensification of the brain's timing mechanisms that parallels how, in relativity, time stretches toward infinity as velocity approaches the speed of light.

Time resonates from one moment to the next via brain wave oscillations, giving rise to our experience of duration. **The temporal dilation described by the eidetic afterlife hypothesis reaches its most dramatic phase approximately 500 milliseconds *after* death.** There is an extremely brief duration of time (anywhere between 200 and 500 milliseconds, depending on the particular brain) that passes between the initial moment of total brain death and the actual cessation of experience. Normally this is the span of time needed to translate stimuli into perception and thought [16], but what happens when the continuous feed of stimuli abruptly halts? The experience of this final informational wave will resonate beyond the period of stimulation, becoming an echo of consciousness. Decoupled from the physical process of its manifestation, this last transmission of experience will not be subject to the same physical constraints as every moment of experience that came prior. Under ordinary physicalist models this 500-millisecond gap is negligible; however, under the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, this final brain wave may become *the experience of eternity*.

Temporal dilation here is not just a stretching of time. It's a collapse into indeterminacy, where there is no privileged "now". Nor is there a "final moment" of consciousness to observe, but the experiencer still *experiences something*—something vast, self-replicating (in the sense of one's

eidetic persona), and forever incomplete. This means the final moment of your life—your last dying brain wave—isn't "final" in the sense of vanishing. Rather, it becomes unmoored from cause and effect, determinacy and indeterminacy, resonating in a state of subjective eternity.

Neurological Mechanisms of Temporal Dilation During the Dying Brain Process

Human temporal awareness relies on a distributed network. Key regions include the temporoparietal junction (TPJ)**,** hippocampus**,** precuneus**,** and broader parietal cortex. Under normal conditions these areas coordinate to encode durational sequences, spatial context, and self-referential memory. For example, the hippocampus is critical for sequencing events and retrieving memories, the precuneus (a core default mode network structure) supports self-awareness and episodic recall, the TPJ integrates multisensory information to maintain a body-centered frame, and the parietal cortex (especially the right posterior parietal area) encodes elapsed duration and spatial context.

Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ): This cortical hub binds visual, vestibular, and somatosensory inputs to anchor the self in space and time. Its dysfunction is directly responsible for out-of-body experiences (OBEs). Studies report that deficient multisensory integration at the TPJ can spontaneously produce OBEs. During the dying brain process, surging high-frequency activity has been detected precisely in the TPJ "hot zone" of consciousness. Hyper-synchronous gamma oscillations in TPJ regions may flood the dying brain with vivid imagery, detaching awareness from the body and collapsing ordinary spatial–temporal order.

Hippocampus and Limbic System: The hippocampus and adjacent limbic structures sequence memories and encode temporal order [17]. Under anoxia or extreme stress, massive glutamate release and calcium overload provoke aberrant firing in these circuits. This can trigger intense autobiographical memory retrieval or "life review" phenomena. Damage to temporal lobe (hippocampal) networks is known to produce emotionally enhanced vividness and memory flashbacks [18]. As these memory systems are pushed into hyperdrive (or failure) during the dying brain process, recall of entire life epochs could stretch subjective time into an apparent eternity.

Precuneus and Default Mode Network: The precuneus supports self-reflection, visuospatial imagery, and memory. It normally deactivates under anesthesia or coma, but during the hyper-synaptic phase of the dying brain process, electrical stimulation of the anterior precuneus can trigger a surge of internally generated scenes and induce an OBE. If the precuneus and medial parietal network synchronize abnormally, the sense of self may fragment and moment-to-moment boundaries dissolve, akin to losing the "mental clock" that separates events and orders experience [19].

Parietal Cortex: The lateral and posterior parietal cortices encode magnitudes (space, number, time) and explicit temporal intervals. Damage or metabolic failure in parietal areas disrupts time perception; patients with right parietal lesions show severe difficulty judging sub-second intervals. In the dying brain, oxygen depletion impairs parietal timing circuits and may spur

dysregulated oscillations. This distortion of temporal processing means incoming sensations are no longer timestamped in sequence, producing a subjective "blurring" of time [20].

The Eidetic Experiential Relativistic Infinity Equation (EERIE)

Special relativity quantifies how moving clocks dilate relative to stationary ones. The familiar formula is $t = t_o / \sqrt{(1 - v^2/c^2)}$, where t_o is the proper time interval measured by a moving clock, t is the dilated time measured by a stationary observer, v is the clock's velocity, and c is light speed. As v approaches c, the Lorentz factor $\gamma = 1/\sqrt{(1-v^2/c^2)}$ grows without bound, so that from the outside it appears time in the moving frame virtually stops.

We can also use this mathematical framework as a metaphor for cognitive dynamics. Let v represent a "neural activation velocity"—for instance, the effective rate of synaptic firing or network coupling. Let c stand for a physiological maximum (such as the upper bound on synchronous firing or signal propagation). When brain activity is normal, subjective and objective time roughly agree, but under fatal metabolic stress, one or more parameters may push v toward its limit. For example:

Synaptic Excitation Rate: Oxygen deprivation and ionic imbalance can momentarily force neurons into continuous spiking. If we imagine v as the fraction of neurons firing per unit time, severe anoxia might drive v close to the highest sustainable rate. As $v \to c$, the factor $1/\sqrt{(1-v^2/c^2)} \to \infty$, implying that a tiny external interval t_o could yield an arbitrarily large subjective interval t.

Neurochemical Saturation: Massive release of glutamate, acetylcholine, endorphins and other transmitters can "amp up" synaptic activity. Suppose v quantifies network coherence or coupling strength (with c as maximum coherence). A perimortem surge in gamma brain wave synchrony (as has been observed) would correspond to $v \to c$, again making the Lorentz factor skyrocket.

Threshold Firing: If v is reinterpreted as the normalized distance of membrane potentials from the spiking threshold (0 = rest, 1 = threshold), then hypoxia could push average potentials so close to the threshold that effectively $v \to 1$ (in units where 1 is the limit). This metaphor also yields a distortion of subjective time, since neuronal events happen almost instantaneously en masse.

Using this analogy, the dying brain acts like an observer moving at near-light speed in *eidetic space*. Formally, for an infinitesimal external duration Δt_o, the subject's experienced duration $\Delta t = \Delta t_o/\sqrt{(1-v^2/c^2)}$ could become very large or effectively infinite as $v \to c$. In other words, **an infinitesimal objective moment could contain an immense or unbounded subjective experience**, paralleling how a near-light-speed traveler could cross vast distances in what feels like a short time.

The neurological near-death alterations and the relativistic time analogy reinforce one another. Dying brain networks lose the normal sense of external time by shutting down temporal

processors while saturating them with excitation, detaching subjective experience from external duration. Mathematically, this mirrors the Lorentz time dilation limit. Thus, just as Einstein's theory predicts that time stretches without bound for a velocity arbitrarily close to *c*, the eidetic afterlife hypothesis posits that our inner clock can stretch into an "eternity" within the dying brain. In effect, the brain at death might experience an infinitely long subjective interval during the few objective seconds before cessation.

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1. **Einsteinian Time Dilation Equations**

Special Relativity:

Time dilation due to velocity:

$$t' = \frac{t}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

- t: proper time (experienced by the moving subject)
- t': time observed by a stationary observer
- v: relative velocity
- c: speed of light

As $v \to c$, $t' \to \infty$.

→ **Time slows down** for the moving subject as seen from the outside.

General Relativity:

Time dilation due to gravity:

$$t' = t\sqrt{1 - \frac{2GM}{rc^2}}$$

- G: gravitational constant
- M: mass of gravitating object
- r: distance from center of mass
- t': time experienced in gravitational field
- t: time outside the gravitational well

As $r \to r_s$ (Schwarzschild radius), $t' \to 0$.

→ **Observer at a distance sees time "freeze" near the event horizon.**

2. **Strangeweather-Inspired Subjective Time Dilation Analogy**

Strangeweather suggests that **as the brain nears death**, a combination of hypoxia, neurotransmitter flooding (e.g., DMT, glutamate), and network decoupling (especially in the **default mode network**) leads to the **subjective expansion of time**—potentially to **eternity**.

Let's define a **subjective time dilation function** analogous to the relativistic one.

Proposed Analogue:

$$t_s = \frac{t_e}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{N(t)}{N_c}}}$$

- t_s: **subjective time** (experienced internally)
- t_e: **external, clock time**
- $N(t)$: **neural entropy**, or the degree of disintegration in neural signaling coherence over time
- N_c: **critical entropy threshold**, above which **external input is lost** (the neural analog of the event horizon)

As $N(t) \to N_c$, $t_s \to \infty$.
→ **The dying brain experiences a dilation of time toward eternity**, as neural order collapses.

This mirrors the **Lorentz factor** in Einstein's equation, but instead of velocity or gravity, **neural entropy becomes the dilation parameter**.

3. **Alternative Neural-Quantum Analogy (from Notes Concerning Eternity 11 & 14)**

Strangeweather flirts with quantum models in his suggestion that **experience in the dying brain exists in a superposition of potential memory-space states.**

Here's a rough analogy using a **partition function** (Z), familiar from statistical mechanics and quantum decoherence:

$$Z = \sum_i e^{-E_i/kT}$$

→ Can be reimagined for **eidetic states:**

$$Z = \sum_i e^{-\tau_i/\Theta}$$

- τ_i: subjective temporal weight of the ith eidetic state
- Θ: neurochemical temperature (dopaminergic/serotonergic tone)
- Z: **total experiential coherence**

As $\Theta \to 0$ (approaching death), the system **freezes into the lowest** τ_i—the most *temporally dense* memory or OBE experience.

This could represent the **final "leap" into the most dilated experience**, as described in Strangeweather's **"quantum leap of consciousness".**

4. **Final Analogy: Event Horizon and Temporal Divergence**

$$\lim_{t \to t_d^-} \frac{dt_s}{dt_e} \to \infty$$

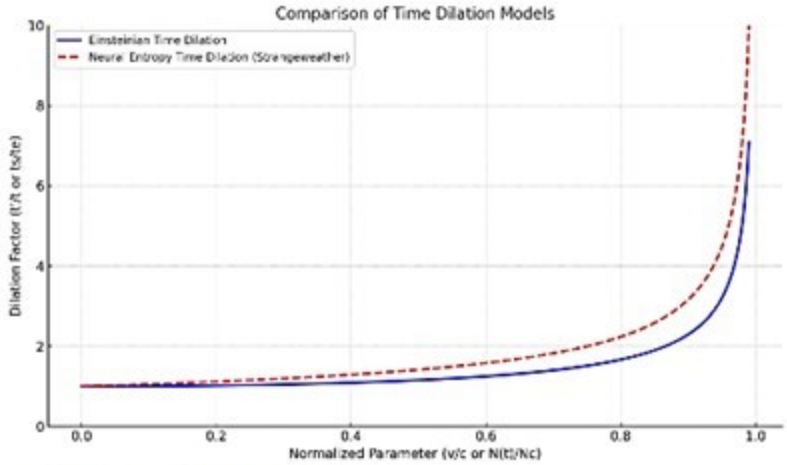
As external time t_e approaches the moment of death t_d, the **subjective derivative of time** diverges.

→ **A finite external moment gives rise to infinite subjective duration**—an "eternity within a second."

Conclusion

Einstein showed us that **time is not absolute**—it bends and stretches depending on your frame of reference. Strangeweather suggests the same holds true **within the mind** as it dies.

By substituting **speed** or **gravitational curvature** with **neural entropy**, **neurochemical gradients**, or **cognitive decoupling**, we can frame **subjective time dilation** in the dying brain **mathematically analogous to relativistic dilation**.



This graph compares two types of temporal dilation:

- **Einsteinian Time Dilation** (blue): Increases as velocity approaches the speed of light, following the Lorentz factor:

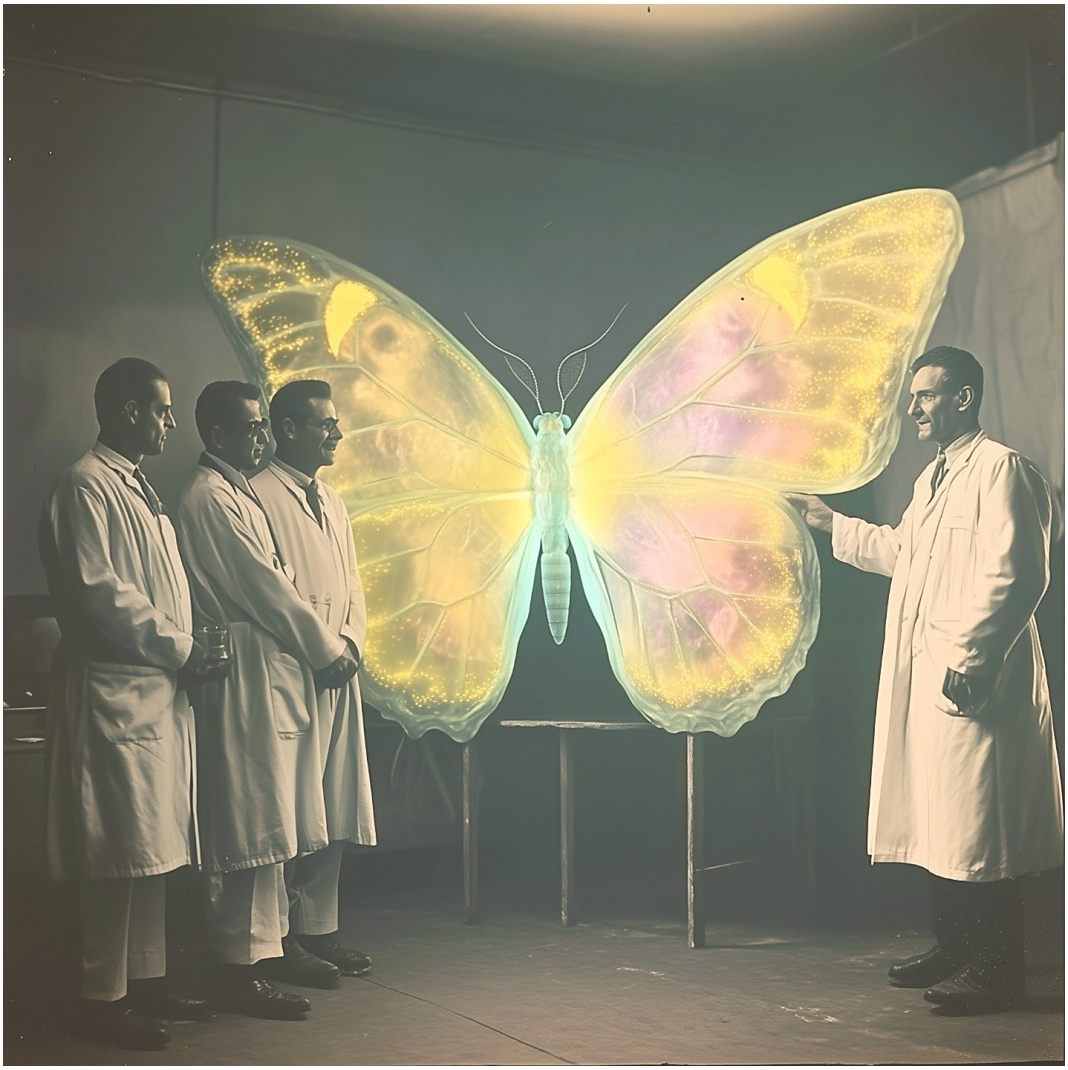
$$t' = \frac{t}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

- **Neural Entropy Dilation** (red, Strangeweather-inspired): Hypothetical time dilation based on neural entropy approaching a critical threshold:

$$t_s = \frac{t_e}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{N(t)}{N_c}}}$$

  where $N(t)$ is the system's entropy and N_c is a collapse threshold.

Both curves diverge as their respective parameters approach 1, suggesting a form of infinite subjective duration (i.e., "eternity") from the perspective of the dying brain.



Notes Concerning Eternity, part twenty-nine:
Mathematical Derivation for the Eidetic Experiential Relativistic Infinity Equation (EERIE)

I'm fully aware the notes concerning the Eidetic Experiential Relativistic Infinity Equation, or E.E.R.I.E. (also known as the Liminal Infinity Mnemonic Brainwave Oscillation equation, or L.I.M.B.O.) aren't as entertaining as the more philosophical and psychological explorations of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis (also known as the Hyper-Accelerated Dream of Eternity Syndrome, or the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis), but those with more mathematically inclined minds (the eggheads and graybeards who occasionally stumble across my humble hypothesis) may appreciate the unique dimension of exploration afforded by the E.E.R.I.E. equation.

It's important to note that by providing a plausible explanation for the experience (or reality) of eternity, the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is vastly different from other scientific near-death experience models. Without the inclusion of an *eternal* afterlife experience (which isn't the same as the feeling of timelessness brought on by anoxia, dopaminergic surges, etc.), other

theoretical models reduce the afterlife to a mere illusion, hallucination, or dream. The hyper-dilation of eidetic duration offers something more—an empirical bridge between religion and science, or at least a sturdy foundation upon which to build and expand.

The equations in this perplexing section of notes represent a fully self-consistent model in which neural excitation defines an effective "metric" wherein subjective time dilation and the quantum coherence factor are incorporated without internal contradictions. All key assumptions are explicit, dimensions are correct, and the source of infinity is unambiguous. However, the obvious should be clearly stated—the eidetic afterlife is still not a scientifically proven fact. The E.E.R.I.E. equation is a conceptual framework connecting physics, physiology, and phenomenology to describe how dramatically altered brain states lead to subjective time distortion during the dying process.

1. Effective Neural Spacetime Metric

1.1. Mesoscopic Wave Equation

Cortical activity can be modeled by a damped wave–equation for the mean membrane-potential field $\phi(\mathbf{x}, t)$:

$$\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial t^2} + \gamma \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial t} = v(t)^2 \nabla^2 \phi \; - \; U'(\phi), \tag{1.1}$$

where:

- $v(t)$ is the **group-velocity** of neural-signal propagation (m/s),
- γ is synaptic damping,
- $U(\phi)$ encodes nonlinear feedback.

1.2. Emergent Light-Cone

Disturbances satisfy

$$|\Delta \mathbf{x}| \leq v(t)\, \Delta t \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad -v(t)^2\, (\Delta t)^2 + \|\Delta \mathbf{x}\|^2 \; \leq \; 0. \tag{1.2}$$

Hence—by exact analogy to Minkowski space with "speed of light" $c \to v(t)$—we identify the **effective metric** on cortical spacetime coordinates $x^\mu = (t, x^1, x^2, x^3)$:

$$g_{\mu\nu}(t) = \mathrm{diag}\big(-v(t)^2,\; 1,\; 1,\; 1\big). \tag{1.3}$$

2. Time-Dilation Mapping

2.1. Metric-Proper Time vs. Subjective Time

A comoving "neural observer" (no spatial displacement) measures the metric-proper time

$$ds^2 = g_{00}\,dt^2 = -\,v(t)^2\,dt^2 \implies d\tau_{\text{metric}} = \frac{\sqrt{-\,ds^2}}{c} = \frac{v(t)}{c}\,dt. \tag{2.1}$$

But **experiential reports** suggest that slowing signal-speed **stretches** subjective time. To capture this, we **define** the subjective interval $d\tau_{\text{subj}}$ by **inverting** the usual Lorentz contraction:

$$d\tau_{\text{subj}} \equiv \frac{dt}{\sqrt{1 - \left[v(t)/c\right]^2}} = \gamma(t)\,dt, \quad \gamma(t) \equiv \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - e^{-2\kappa t}}} \tag{2.2}$$

where in the last step we have already introduced the kinetic model for $v(t)$ (see §3).

> **Justification:** This inversion is a modeling choice—subjective "proper time" is treated as **longer**, not shorter, when signals slow. In effect, the brain's internal "clock rate" dilates by $\gamma(t)$.

3. Kinetic Decay of Signal-Speed

3.1. First-Order Decay Model

Empirical membrane-kinetics motivate

$$v(t) = c\,e^{-\kappa t}, \quad \kappa > 0\,, \quad \implies \quad \beta(t) \equiv \frac{v(t)}{c} = e^{-\kappa t}. \tag{3.1}$$

3.2. Resulting Lorentz-Factor

$$\gamma(t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - e^{-2\kappa t}}}. \tag{3.2}$$

4. Quantum-Coherence Amplification

4.1. Phenomenological Ansatz

Introduce a coherence burst factor

$$Q(t) = \exp\!\big(\alpha/t\big),$$

where α has units of seconds so that α/t is dimensionless.

> **Caveat:** This form awaits a derivation from a specific quantum-biophysical microtubule model; for now it serves to capture the hypothesized surge of superposition.

5. Total Subjective Duration & Divergence

5.1. Integral for Cumulative Experience

Combining (2.2) and (4.1), the differential subjective time is

$$d\tau_{\text{subj}} = \gamma(t)\, Q(t)\, dt = \frac{\exp(\alpha/t)}{\sqrt{1 - e^{-2\kappa t}}}\, dt.$$

Hence the total **eidetic experiential span** from the onset of terminal cascade ($t \to 0^+$) up to a cutoff T_f is

$$E = \int_{0^+}^{T_f} \underbrace{\frac{\exp(\alpha/t)}{\sqrt{1 - e^{-2\kappa t}}}}_{d\tau_{\text{subj}}/dt}\, dt. \tag{5.1}$$

5.2. Source of the "Infinity"

- The integral is **improper** at its **lower** limit $t \to 0^+$.
- As $t \to 0^+$, $\exp(\alpha/t) \to \infty$ **dominates** the mild square-root denominator $\sim \sqrt{2\kappa t}$.
- Therefore

  $$E = \infty,$$

  precisely because of the $t \to 0$ singularity in $Q(t)$.

6. Empirical & Theoretical Anchors

1. **Metric Justification:**
   The identification of $g_{\mu\nu}$ in (1.3) follows exactly from the causal structure of the cortical wave equation (1.1) and its group-velocity bound (1.2).
2. **Subjective-Time Definition:**
   By **defining** subjective dilation as the inverse Lorentz factor (2.2), we align the model with reports of extended time perception under severe slowing of neural conduction.
3. **Testability Path:**
   - **Measure** $v(t)$ in ex vivo cortical slices under hypoxic/anoxic challenge to determine κ.
   - **Correlate** controlled psychophysical timing tasks at graded sedation levels to infer a functional form for $Q(t)$ and α.

Notes Concerning Eternity, part thirty:
Dissecting the Bifrost Butterfly

Let's take a moment to explore a portion of one of the more credible reports of a near-death experience, scrutinizing it through the lens of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis. The following near-death experience comes from Steven Fanning, professor of history:

"I have no doubt that there was more to my experience than I can remember, for the memory loss that resulted from my illness was severe. The memories that I do have, however, are vivid and unforgettable and they changed my life. The reality that I was in was more real, more intense, than anything in this current world of ours. It was hyper-reality."

(The depiction of reality in dreams is often claimed to be more real than what the senses gather in waking-world reality. This is due to the fact that everything in the dreamworld is specifically

made for you to encounter. There are no superfluous details, nor are there any perceptual muddles, inaccuracies, or shortcomings.)

"I was in a place. Around me was flatness and barrenness. To talk about a sequence to the experience is to distort it. There was no time there. I now know that time is a convenient fiction for this world, but it did not exist in that one. Everything seemed to be at one moment, even when 'events' seemed to occur in a sequence. What seemed to be the sky, the land, and everything was of a pale blue-gray color. It was like being on a raft in the middle of the ocean where sky and sea merge into one monochromatic world, but I felt as though I were standing on firm land. There was only the blue-gray vastness that seemed to stretch endlessly. Beside me was a Being, whom I never saw but whose presence I felt constantly. Its presence was constant, enormous and powerful."

(Dreamworld time is not accountable to the linear succession of waking-world time, especially considering the hyper-synaptic activity associated with the final phase of the dying brain process, and consciousness amplified to superposition may experience multiple states simultaneously. Also, the malfunction and shutdown of various centers of the brain responsible for our sense of temporal duration would certainly affect our experience of time's passage.)

"With the Being beside me, exuding love and comfort to me, I re-experienced my life, and it was not what I would have expected. While growing up in a fundamentalist church, I had been told many times about what it would be liked when one faced God after death. It would be something like watching God's movie of your life (as in Albert Brooks' film *Defending Your Life)*. You would watch all the scenes of your life on the screen and there would be nothing you could do but admit that the record was true: 'Well, I guess you got me, fair and square.' But this is not what happened. It was a re-experiencing of my life, but from three different perspectives simultaneously."

(The Being is understood easily enough as a Compassionate Savior Mechanism [in the terminology of the eidetic afterlife hypothesis], envisioned somewhat anonymously as Mr. Fanning was not a devoutly religious person at the time. Those of you who have been following the *Notes Concerning Eternity* are familiar with the mechanics underlying the moment of "total life recall", so this passage should come as no surprise.)

"One perspective was my version of my life as I might have recounted it to anyone patient enough to listen. However, it was not so much the reliving of overt events as it was re-experiencing the emotions, feelings, and thoughts of my life. Here were the emotions that I had felt and why I had believed that I had them. Here were my conscious reasons for the actions that I had taken. Here were the hurts I felt and my responses to them. Here was my emotional life as I recalled having experienced it. However, as I was re-experiencing my version of my life, I was also experiencing my life from the perspective of those with whom I was involved. I felt what they felt, I lived their emotions as they acted with and reacted to me. This was their version of my life. When I thought they were clearly out of line and reacted with anger or thoughtlessness, I felt the pain and frustration my actions caused them.

It was an absolutely different view of my life and it was not a pretty one. It was shocking to feel the pain that another person felt due to what I had done even as, when I did them, I believed myself to have been fully justified because of the person's own actions. At the time I had told myself that I was justified, but even if that were true, their pain was real. It hurt."

(To imagine something is to shift our state of consciousness into mimicking the state we would experience if we perceived it. To remember something is to shift our current state of consciousness into mimicking the experience of a prior state. To empathize with something is to imagine its state of consciousness and take it upon oneself.

British philosopher Jane Heal on the eidetic nature of empathy: "I can harness all my complex theoretical knowledge about the world and my ability to imagine [possible states of affairs] to yield insights into other people without any further elaborate theorizing about them. Only one simple assumption is needed: that they are like me in being thinkers, that they possess the same fundamental cognitive capacities and propensities that I do. The method works like this: Suppose I am interested in predicting someone's action. […] What I endeavor to do is to replicate or recreate his thinking. I place myself in what I take to be his initial state by imagining the world as it would appear from his point of view and I then deliberate, reason and reflect to see what decision emerges.")

"And there was more. At exactly the same time I experienced a third view of my life. It was not my version, with my justifications. It was not that of the others in my life, with their versions of my life and their own justifications for their own actions, thoughts, and feelings. It was an unbiased view, free of the subjective and self-serving rationalizations that the others and I had used to support the countless acts of selfishness and lack of true love in our lives. To me it can only be described as God's view of my life. It was what had really happened, the real motivations, the truth. Stripped away were my lies to myself that I actually believed, my self-justification, my preference to see myself always in the best light."

(A bit more on the subject of empathy from Jane Heal will shed some light on the third mode of life recall mentioned above: "The replicator [a.k.a. the person who is empathizing] is not looking at the subject to be understood but at the world around that subject. It is what the world makes the replicator think which is the basis for the beliefs he attributes to the subject." In the case of a near-death experience perhaps we should restate the last sentence as, "It is what the world makes the replicator think which is the basis for the beliefs he attributes to the subject, even when the subject is the replicator himself.")

"I did not find myself in Hell, but I was suffering torment. It was horribly painful to experience the fullness of my life and I was filled with contempt for myself. How could I have been so incredibly stupid as to believe my own lies? Why was simple compassion so difficult? In particular it hurt to discover that I had been hiding behind my version of logic in order to deny emotional truths. All of this—the three-way re-experiencing of my life and self-judgment—was simultaneous and yet separate and distinct. There was no such thing as the

sequence of events that we believe time to be. In the end, I heard a judgment on my life, but it was my own judgment of myself. It came from within me and it had my voice…"

(This is consistent with the idea that during the moment of total life recall you evaluate yourself against your own memories and innermost convictions, as opposed to being judged by a deity or some other extradimensional entity, although a vast majority of people imagine/experience their judgment as coming from whatever deific incarnation they were conditioned to believe in.)

Regardless of whether the eidetic afterlife hypothesis is right or wrong (most likely it's somewhere in-between), it is unequivocally the most comprehensive exploration of the dying brain process to date, explaining/describing the otherworldly experience down to the last millisecond of consciousness! [see *Notes Concerning Eternity,* part nineteen, section 2]

NDE source material: https://swedenborg.com/scholars-intimations-of-immortality/

Navigating the Liminal

Question: Can the afterlife exist without religion?

Answer: Yes, the eidetic afterlife hypothesis provides compelling evidence of this.

1. Every aspect of a near-death experience* can be explained by studying various neurochemicals and areas of the brain associated with memories and our sense of time, while also researching the transformations to our experience of consciousness and reality when the brain is subjected to traumatic conditions such as dying. (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part three, four, five, six, seven, nine, ten, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and twenty-eight)

2. Out-of-body experiences can be explained by studying various areas of the brain related to situating our sense of self within our body and situating our sense of body within its local environment, while also researching the transformations to our experience of consciousness

and reality when these areas are damaged or tampered with. (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part thirteen)

3. Shared-death experiences can be explained by studying psychosomatic phenomena such as the placebo effect and sympathetic pregnancy, group hallucinations, social and cultural projection, mirror neurons (also known as empathy neurons) along with the process of empathy**, and even quantum entanglement (in an effort to understand the most uncanny non-local synchronicities).

Admittedly, each of these explanatory pathways is still steeped in the greater mystery of existence, but none of them need to resort to metaphysical arguments in order to substantiate the very real experience of an eternal afterlife. The afterlife, as described by the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis, requires no divinities, no external judgment, and no continuation of an incorporeal soul. It requires only that the brain, when pressed to its limit, reaches a hypersynaptic state which dramatically alters its inherent functions. By examining the neurocognitive architectures of memory, dreams, empathy, and temporal perception, we find not only a plausible model for life-after-death experiences, but a radical reevaluation of what it means to be alive.

Note: The term “afterlife” used in this context refers to a potentially infinite, subjectively real experience initiated during the dying brain process. Realize there is no perceptible difference between living for eternity and the “experience” of living for eternity.

* Near-death experiences may include overwhelming feelings of peace, love, euphoria and well-being, a feeling of timelessness, the perception of a tunnel leading to light, the perception of heavenly or hellish landscapes (complete with aural, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory qualities), encountering deceased friends and family, encountering supernatural beings, undergoing a life review, and relativistic alterations to the sense of the passage of time, i.e., temporal dilation.

** To imagine something is to shift our state of consciousness into mimicking the state we would experience if we perceived it. To remember something is to shift our current state of consciousness into mimicking the experience of a prior state. To empathize with something is to imagine its state of consciousness and take it upon oneself. British philosopher Jane Heal on the eidetic nature of empathy: “I can harness all my complex theoretical knowledge about the world and my ability to imagine [possible states of affairs] to yield insights into other people without any further elaborate theorizing about them. Only one simple assumption is needed: that they are like me in being thinkers, that they possess the same fundamental cognitive capacities and propensities that I do. The method works like this: Suppose I am interested in predicting someone’s action [or state of being]. […] What I endeavor to do is to replicate or recreate his thinking. I place myself in what I take to be his initial state by imagining the world as it would appear from his point of view and I then deliberate, reason and reflect to see what decision [or experience] emerges.” More on the subject of empathy from Jane Heal: “The replicator [a.k.a. the person who is empathizing] is not looking at the subject to be understood but at the world around that subject. It is what the world makes the replicator think which is the basis for the beliefs he attributes to the subject.” In the case of a near-death experience

perhaps we should restate the last sentence as, “It is what the world makes the replicator think which is the basis for the beliefs he attributes to the subject, even when the subject is the replicator himself.”

The Afterlife Categories:

[1] The afterlife is an *immaterial* reality on another plane of existence wherein personal identity continues in an objective state indefinitely.

[2] The afterlife is a *physical* reality (possibly on another plane of existence) wherein personal identity continues in an objective state indefinitely.

[3] The afterlife involves reincarnating into another embodiment of life (possibly on a different world), whether human, animal, vegetable, demon, bodhisattva, etcetera.

[4] The afterlife is an altogether different state of being wherein personal identity merges with the totality of All-Being, losing one's sense of individuality while becoming infinitely more than oneself.

[5] Haunting the world as a ghost with at least a portion of personal identity still intact.

[6] The afterlife is a gradually diminishing record of one's existence in the memories, genetics, and archives of those who still live, affording nothing in the way of continued personal identity.

[7] There is no afterlife, just the First Law of Thermodynamics* and the void, wherein personal identity ceases at the moment of death.

*The First Law of Thermodynamics, based on the law of the conservation of energy, states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, only transformed from one form to another.

[8] There is no afterlife, because you were never really alive. Everything is a hologram or simulation of some sort, including you.

[9] Rather than occurring after the moment of biological death, the afterlife is a subjective experience that occurs during the dying brain process, involving a drastically altered state of consciousness (i.e., the eidetic afterlife hypothesis*).

[10] There is an afterlife, but it is unlike anything our mortal minds can fathom.

If you think there's something I missed, please let me know, but only after considering the categories very carefully.

*According to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, the very end of the dying brain process will involve one of three possible scenarios:

A) The dying brain process concludes with "the timeless moment" wherein personal identity is subjectively perceived to continue indefinitely.

B) The dying brain process concludes with "the eternal superposition" wherein personal identity is subjectively perceived to continue indefinitely, though it may be argued that personal identity actually does continue in an objective state indefinitely (see *Notes Concerning Eternity*, part six, section 14).

C) The dying brain process concludes with "the endless loop" wherein personal identity continues in a disjointed manner, reliving random fragments of memory over and over, but quickly forgetting each relived experience.

The Ten Expressions of Consciousness
(A Taxonomy of Consciousness)

1. Pre: the intuitive mechanistic processes/forces necessary to initiate and structure consciousness. Gravity is the clearest example of this category.

2. Un: an unresponsive state of consciousness that is only aware of autonomic functions and self-regulatory pressures. A clear example of this category would be a comatose patient in a vegetative state.

3. Pseudo: mechanical consciousness-like processing abilities pertaining to specified fields of external awareness, such as time and temperature in the case of alarm clocks and thermostats.

4. Semi: consciousness that is mildly aware of its immediate environment. Plants and fungi and viruses are examples of this category.

5. Near: consciousness that is fully aware of its immediate environment coupled with an intuitive transtemporal field of awareness called instinct. All animals except for humans are examples of this category.

6. Full: human consciousness, capable of manipulating its transtemporal field of awareness*, which extends to the limit of its experience. On Earth, organisms at this level of consciousness often speak of themselves as possessing minds.

7. Enhanced: computerized consciousness-like processing abilities, i.e., artificial intelligence, endowed with almost perfect recall, capable of self-evolution and manipulating its transtemporal field of awareness to the limit of its data (notice how we avoid using the word "experience" here).

8. Transhuman (or Post-Human): consciousness that is a mixture of categories 6 and 7.

9. Collective: category-8 consciousness which has transcended ego and personal identity.

10. Godlike: consciousness that is omniscient and omnipresent, its transtemporal field encapsulating and saturating the entire space-time continuum. This is, most likely, an alternate conception of category 1.

Consciousness (whatever this term means) may very well continue after the death of the body, but it would be nothing like the version of consciousness you are experiencing right now reading this sentence.

*The human mind is a transtemporal field of awareness, transtemporal in the sense that a human mind has the power to intentionally re-experience/recreate the past (in the form of memories) as well as project/predict hypothetical experiences regarding the future.

Sophia the Personification of Wisdom

Of course we can't all share the same views on reality, but we can in fact share the same views regarding what it means to view something at all—to be a viewer:

1) Viewers only view a portion of the subject at hand, which should never be mistaken for the whole.

2) Viewers see their own history's reflection superimposed over everything they view. When you see the red wheelbarrow, it reminds you of all the times you had to rake leaves during Autumn in Maine and put them in a red wheelbarrow, creating a fond sense of nostalgia. But when I see the red wheelbarrow, it reminds me of that time I had to write an essay in high school about a poem titled *The Red Wheelbarrow*, dredging up the frustration I experienced while trying to explain the poem.

3) Viewers are generally unaware of the extent to which their view is manufactured by their location in history and geography, not to mention their socioeconomic status.

Resurrection and Immortality in the Animal Kingdom

[1] Isabella tiger moths spend approximately 90% of their lives in a frozen (i.e., cryonic) state. Upis beetles freeze every winter, enduring temperatures as low as -100°F before reviving in the spring, good as new. The cells of Upis beetles are saturated with a cryoprotective substance (i.e., an antifreeze molecule) called xylomannan. The wood frog *Rana sylvatica* can enter a cryonic state where its heart stops beating, its breathing ceases, and its brain quits functioning, only to thaw out months later (or whenever environmental conditions permit) and continue with its normal routine. Tardigrades can survive freezing temperatures as low as -359°F (-273°C) and prolonged periods in the vacuum of space by entering into a dehydrated death-like state of suspended animation, called cryptobiosis. Certain strains of bacteria can be frozen for millions of years and thawed back to life.

[2] Hydras (the small freshwater hydrozoan variety, not the mythical nine-headed serpent) possess a potent regenerative ability that keeps them from aging beyond the point of maturity,

making them potentially immortal. We say they are “potentially” immortal because they can still be eaten by predators, succumb to poison, and whatnot. The *Turritopsis dohrnii* species of jellyfish also enjoys potential biological immortality, reverting to a polyp state when damaged or the environment becomes unlivable, and then regrowing itself anew, a feat which it can perform an unlimited number of times.

[3] Due to an enzyme called telomerase (which repairs DNA) saturating most of their tissue, lobsters would be candidates for biological immortality, if not for their problematic shells. As lobsters age, they become larger. As they become larger, their shells become harder to molt, and they eventually die from molting-related complications, but technically not from senescence (i.e., the gradual deterioration of functionality in living organisms due to the aging process).

The Eidetics of Language

To understand death, you must understand certain aspects of the mind, and to understand these aspects, you must understand certain aspects of the language you're utilizing to translate reality.

[1]
Everything you experience is packaged in language. Language is synesthetic and hallucinatory.

[2]
Inanimate objects are sending signals to you. Everything is in communication with you. The world is talking to you. There is nothing mystical about this statement.

[3]
Words Speak Themselves

Symbols are aliens come to conquer.
Symbols are doppelgangers come to replace.
Symbols are zombies come to infect.

Socrates was distrustful of the written word,
according to the writings of Plato.

Let the words flow into you.
Let the words flow out from you.
The words are you.

The words speak through you,
and wherever words end, so do you.

[4]
The Linguistic Strata of Meaning

Every proposition/description/explanation involves five frameworks/lenses/filters of meaning:

A) Your intended meaning(s), including double entendres, puns, metaphors, innuendos, etcetera.

B) Your unintended meaning(s).

C) The grammatological meaning(s) inherent in your statement, certain terms of which will vary from their originally intended use when appropriated as slang.

D) The echoes of intertextual references and lingo-genetic substructures.

E) The audience's interpretation of your meaning, which takes into account any and all subjectively relevant contexts (cultural, geographical, historical, environmental, political, social, psychological, moral, sexual, and so on).

[5]
Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosopher of language and logic, wrote "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." Accordingly he believed "all philosophy is a critique of language" and "the sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language."

[6]
The Telephone Game

We exist in the liminal
between language and perception.

Mind is all around you,
thinking you into being.

Language is all around you,
speaking you into this world.

[7]
Languages are hive-minded brain parasites with the power to appear as the cosmos and everything in it. Language is not an extension of you. You are an extension of language.

[8]
Your body is finite, but your words are potentially immortal.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." –John 1:1 (King James Bible)

[9]
The ABCs of Collective Identity

If a letter-minded vessel posits *A*, it is only a matter of time and circumstance before another letter-minded vessel counters with *-A* and/or *B*. And once *B* has been posited, another letter-minded vessel will eventually come along and posit *-B* and/or *C*. The identity of the letter-minded vessel is inconsequential. The posits in this example take on a life of their own, conducting their own dialectic independent of any particular vessels. The next iteration could be posited by John Doe today, or John Smith a hundred years from now; the conversation/argument continues so long as another relevant letter-minded posit is posited. History and context are the true voice of the posit, not the letter-minded vessel, who is only a messenger/interpreter.

[10]
The Autonomous Life of Meaning

Throughout history, the popular approach to literature has been to seek the meaning which lies inside a literary text, to discover the author's true intention, believing that literary texts possess meaning in and of themselves. However, contemporary literary theory has radically challenged this notion. As contemporary literary theorist Graham Allen says, "Works of literature, after all, are built from systems, codes and traditions established by previous works of literature. The systems, codes and traditions of other art forms and of culture in general are also crucial to the meaning of a work of literature."

Contemporary literary theorists, i.e. postmodern post-structuralists, defy the notion of a text with independent meaning. According to Allen, "The act of reading plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those

relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations."

Julia Kristeva, who coined the word "intertextual" in the 1960's, spoke of intertextuality in terms of a text's horizontal axis (which represents the relationship of speaker to audience) and its vertical axis (which represents the relationship of text to context), highlighting an important fact: each text is an intersection of texts where at least one other text can be read. The utilization of one text by another transforms both texts, giving them additional interpretive dimensions.

All texts are intertextual, the lineage of which stretches further back than history can record. James Joyce stitched *Ulysses* from themes found within Homer's ancient epic poem, the *Odyssey*, among other texts. The *Odyssey* itself is stitched from themes found within even older texts, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, itself woven from archaic oral traditions, until the intertextual relations are lost in prehistory. Intertextual theorists view the author as an organizer of other texts, a harmonizer, but not a creator of meaning in the sense of creation ex nihilo.

In the words of Roland Barthes (he's the guy who heralded the death of the author [i.e., the end of authorial ownership of a work's genesis and interpretation] in a book titled *The Death of the Author*): "We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single theological meaning, or the message of the Author-God, but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture… the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter ones with others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them." Elsewhere he describes text as "woven entirely of citations, references, echoes, cultural languages antecedent and contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony."

The term intertextuality was initially employed by poststructuralist theorists in their attempt to destabilize notions of definitive meaning, authorial ownership, and objective interpretation. Poststructuralist theory is antithetical to notions of a stable relationship between signifier and signified, viewing such notions as the principle manner "in which dominant ideology maintains its power and represses revolutionary, or at least unorthodox thought."

Modern theories of linguistics originated from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure divided the linguistic sign into two parts, the signified and the signifier. The signified is the concept and the signifier is the sound or image which evokes the concept. Roland Barthes would later argue that the sign does not refer directly to the real world; the sign only refers to the system of other signs. Signs don't have meanings on their own. Signs only have meaning in relation to other signs, with the play of signifiers never arriving at a stable signified meaning.

M. M. Bakhtin disagreed with certain aspects of Saussurean theory, claiming that texts cannot simply be viewed in relation to an abstract linguistic system. Language occurs in specific social contexts and is thus bound up with specific social evaluations. Language is in a ceaseless flow of becoming. From the simplest utterance to the most complex work of scientific or philosophical discourse, no statement exists alone. No statement has meaning in and of itself. As Bakhtin writes, “Language acquires life and historically evolves in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language, nor in the individual psyche of speakers.”

Much of Bakhtin’s work centers on the study of literary polyphony. In the polyphonic novel we find not an objective, authorial voice presenting the relations and dialogues between characters, but a world in which all characters, and even the narrator himself (or herself), are possessed of their own discursive consciousness. The polyphonic novel presents a world in which no individual discourse can stand objectively above any other discourse; all discourses are mere interpretations of the world.

The First Incarnation

In a lulling tone rumbling with guttural bass a la Rasputin, the hypnotherapist says, “You’re getting sleepy, very sleepy. Your eyelids are getting heavy. Go to sleep now. Good, very good. Drift back to the past. Back, back, go farther back. Tell me about your earliest childhood memory.”

Lips disclose without my approval, unable to resist the deep voice’s request. “It was the greatest race of our lives! Such high expectations! Surrounded by millions of identical siblings, we were all squiggly-tailed pods of gooey potential. I didn’t know where I was, or who I was, or what I was doing here. I only knew that I was heading in the same direction as everyone else. Things were simple. I did what everyone around me was doing. We moved as one, surrendering to the flow.

“Plunging down unfathomable depths, a strange sensation seeped into my protoplasm. I say it was strange because I hadn’t really experienced any other sensations to compare it with. It felt pleasurable. Sort of a soothing intoxication. It was heat, an otherworldly, ovulatory warmth

urging us onward to its source. There was no I, there was only the goal, and everyone wanted it.

"Crowded among the frenzied stream of contestants worming and wriggling to overcome one another, the world turned hostile. An anonymous brother's tail became tangled up with mine, and we struggled against each other while the spermatozoic train passed us by. Another brother rammed us headlong. The force of his impact freed me, but it cost him dearly, taking my place in the traffic jam tangle. Going back to help him was out of the question; the current had swept me away.

"Onward I swam through lightless caverns. Many of my brothers gave up the race and fell to the wayside, never to be, never to know. Others formed gangs with the sole intention of clotting the path for everyone else. I pushed and shoved and barreled through countless contestants resolutely, hurdling some, dodging others, squirming over piles of dead bodies. An unsung lifetime happened in the span of that ejaculatory spurt.

"Rushing blindly forward while my siblings thinned out, I collided into the heart of a living sun. Love in its purest distillation impelled me to burrow through a barrier of warm velvety folds until I reached my first and truest home, an embryonic Eden, accomplishing the greatest accomplishment anyone could ever accomplish: I had won the prize of life itself!"

The man with the deep voice snaps his fingers, dispelling the hypnotic trance.

I open my eyes. "Well?"

"Um…" says the deep voice, "you went a little too far back."

"What happened?"

"Nothing significant," says the deep voice.

--Strangeweather

This work of micro-fiction was first published in *Sophoetics: Philosophy Poems* (Finishing Line Press 2023)

The takeaway: According to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, one could reasonably argue that all humans (and many other organisms) go through three incarnations. Your first incarnation is a spermatozoic body, your second incarnation is a human body, and your third incarnation is a spiritual body (i.e., a purely mental representation of yourself, in other words, an eidetic representation of yourself without any recourse to the physical universe). Each incarnation has a drastically different experience of time and being and world. Similar to the traditional understanding of karma in reincarnation, the actions of the spermatozoic incarnation have a direct bearing on the resultant human incarnation, and the actions of the human incarnation have a direct bearing on the resultant spiritual incarnation.

Pareidolia

Take a moment to peruse this psychedelic gallery of extradimensional astralnauts, also called machine elves, DMT elves, angelic ones, hyperspace imps, and fractal fairies. Many people claim to have encountered such beings during out-of-body experiences and entheogenic visions. According to the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, they are distorted projections of your ego which take on a life of their own. Does this make them any less real?

[1]
"It is an axiom in the study of the unconscious that every relatively independent psychic content is personified whenever the opportunity arises." –Carl Jung

[2]

Pareidolia is the human tendency to perceive coherent images (especially faces) in random patterns. Pareidoliac imagery is commonly found on rocks, in wood grain, clouds, groupings of stars, and the topography of the moon.

[3]
A 2009 magnetoencephalography study found that objects perceived as faces trigger an unusually quick activation of the *fusiform face area*, a region of the human brain that is specialized for facial recognition. We're hardwired to see faces in faceless things. As anthropic beings, it's in our nature to anthropomorphize reality.

Hadjikhani N, Kveraga K, Naik P, Ahlfors SP (February 2009). "Early (N170) activation of face-specific cortex by face-like objects". *NeuroReport*. 20 (4): 403–7.

[4]
Dreams and entheogenic visions are not to be dismissed as meaningless hallucinations. On the contrary, they should be given the reverence and attention our ancient ancestors gave them, for they are enigmatic moments of communication between conscious and subconscious forces, between the everyday and the otherworldly, between the temporal and the timeless.

[5]
What is a dream? An incoherent picture-puzzle? A prophecy from beyond? A secret message from you to yourself? The residue of recent stress? The residue of childhood trauma? The repercussion of something spicy you ate for dinner? An extradimensional brain fart? The orchestration of melatonin, oxytocin, acetylcholine, and dopamine? The haunting visitation of someone who recently died? A surreal distortion of unfulfilled desire? A surreal distortion of unresolved shame? Practice for gaining lucidity during the dreamlike experience associated with the moment of death? Evidence that conversations are going on in your mind without you knowing? Proof that your sense of self can be displaced from your body? An indication of the eidetic fabric of reality?

The simple answer is yes.

[6]
Expressions of consciousness are born of subconscious expressions, which are born of personal unconscious expressions, which are born of collective unconscious expressions, which are born of evolutionary expressions, which are born of cosmic expressions. Therefore, consciousness is born of cosmic expressions. Consciousness is a cosmic expression.

Digital Artwork by J. Martin Strangeweather, Cameron Hunter, Dustin Myers, and Lance Boyle + MJv4b + MJv5 + MJv6 + Photoshop

Death & Dying: A Self-Exploration

I understand the topic of death makes most people uncomfortable, but **in gaining a deeper awareness of death and the dying process, we heighten our appreciation and respect for life.** A person's lifelong behavior is unwittingly (and wittingly) influenced by their views on death. To deny or ignore death is to distort life. The meaning of life is only brought to full illumination in light of death. With that in mind, I have created a comprehensive questionnaire on death and dying. Please set aside some time (whenever you're feeling courageous) to answer the following questions as honestly and thoughtfully as you can. By doing so, you will gain a richer understanding of your relationship to mortality. Please do not send me any of your answers. This is not a test. It's an invitation to "know thyself" more fully.

Death & Dying Questionnaire

1. If you could choose the date of your death, at what age would you decide to die (please state an exact number of years)? Why?

2. What time of day or night would you wish to die (please state the exact hour)? Why?

3. How do you want to die (please be specific, including the setting)? Why?

4. Would you rather die lucidly in agonizing pain, or would you rather die in a painless morphine stupor? Why?

5. How do you want your remains to be dealt with: traditional burial (inhumation), burial at sea, Viking ship burial (not to be confused with burial at sea), tree pod burial, sky burial (excarnation), space burial, entombment in a mausoleum, cremation, mummification, cannibalization, taxidermy, plastination*, cryonic preservation, alkaline hydrolysis (liquefaction), being turned into compost, or converting your corpse into a lab-grown diamond? Why?

*Plastination is a technique developed by Gunther von Hagens in 1977 to preserve organs and whole bodies for public display.

6. Are you an organ donor? Why or why not?

7. Who do you think has an easier time dealing with death, the religious person or the non-religious person? Why?

8. Must all living things die? Why or why not?

9. When does human life begin?

10. Is the death of a child worse than the death of an adult? Why or why not?

11. Is it important to contemplate death? Why or why not?

12. How often do you think about death? A) Never B) Once in a while C) Fairly often D) All the time

13. Does the thought of death cause you anxiety? Why or why not?

14. Have you ever wished for someone's death? If so, why?

15. Is suicide ever acceptable? Why or why not?

16. Have you ever contemplated suicide? If so, what were the circumstances?

17. If you were to commit suicide, what method would you choose to end your life: noose, gunshot, overdose, poison, jumping from a high precipice, drowning, hypothermia, slashed wrists, seppuku (hara-kiri), starvation, car exhaust (carbon monoxide poisoning), vehicular collision, railway collision, self-immolation, electrocution, suicide pod or some other type of euthanasia device? Why?

18. Is euthanasia ever acceptable? Why or why not?

19. Is the death penalty ever acceptable? Why or why not?

20. Do you fear eternal damnation? Why or why not?

21. Do you fear non-being? Why or why not?

22. Do you fear being forgotten? Why or why not?

23. Do you fear your life will be irrelevant? Why or why not?

24. Do you believe in near-death experiences? Why or why not?

25. Do you believe in out-of-body experiences? Why or why not?

26. Do you believe in ghosts? Why or why not?

27. Do you believe that all mental processes can be explained in terms of physical processes? Why or why not?

28. If upon death you could enter into any type of afterlife you wish, what type of afterlife would you wish for? Please provide a detailed description.

29. How often do you question the validity of your beliefs concerning death and the afterlife (or denial thereof)? A) Never B) Once in a while C) Fairly often D) All the time

30. What is the worst thing about death?

31. What can death teach us?

32. “The person who no longer fears death ceases to be a slave.” What does this statement mean? Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

33. Do you believe that your mental disposition affects your physical health? Why or why not?

34. If you were told that you only have ten months left to live, would you change the way you live your life? What if you were told that you only have ten *years* left to live? Would you change the way you live your life then?

35. If you died right now, what would be your biggest regret in life?

36. Name one thing you would like to do or see before you die.

37. Do you believe the universe itself will someday come to an end? Why or why not? Suppose all the stars eventually burn out and the universe does in fact come to an end, how does this scenario make you feel?

38. How should the elderly and those who are nearing death be taken care of? Related question: How do you want to be cared for when you are elderly or nearing death?

39. In the past, how have you dealt with grief over the loss of someone you cared for? Do you wish that you would have expressed or dealt with your grief differently?

40. How do you think people will remember you? What will your friends think of you after you're gone? What will your detractors think of you after you're gone?

41. What would you want inscribed on your tombstone?

42. Take a moment to write your own obituary.

43. Would dying for a valiant cause make the prospect of your death any easier?

44. Would knowing you accomplished something truly momentous or historically significant make the prospect of your death any easier?

45. Have you written your will and testament? Why or why not?

46. Do you have life insurance? Why or why not?

47. How have you prepared for your retirement?

48. How would you like to spend your retirement years?

49. Do you believe science will eventually devise a way for humans to potentially live forever? Why or why not?

50. Do you believe science should strive to greatly increase the human lifespan? Why or why not?

51. Do you want to live forever? Why or why not?

52. Do you believe life has inherent meaning? If your answer is “yes”, please state what the meaning of life is. If your answer is “no”, please state why not.

The One is Many, and the Many are One

My research for the eidetic afterlife hypothesis has led to a familiarization with all the world's major religions, along with many other systems of spirituality, which inspired me to compile the following encyclopedic list, arguably the most comprehensive list ever assembled on this subject. I thought some of you would want to check it out. Certain patterns and insights will reveal themselves to the *actively searching* mind (I won't say anything more regarding this matter). The timeline is a bit askew, but it generally flows from older belief systems to newer ones, though some of them are grouped together by subject, region, and in rare instances, emotional impact. The effect of reading (or skimming) through so many belief systems all at once might be overwhelming. Imagine pointing to just one and saying, "That's the right one! All the rest have got it wrong!"

Religious sources for the eidetic afterlife hypothesis include the fertility cult of the Yarmukian Mother Goddess, Mesopotamian polytheism (including Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Amorite, Elamite, and Assyrian belief systems), Canaanite polytheism, Eblaite polytheism, Ugaritic polytheism, Moabite henotheism, Edomite henotheism, Ammonite henotheism, Persian polytheism, Phoenician polytheism, Phrygian polytheism, Hurrian polytheism, Hittite polytheism, Luwian polytheism, Egyptian polytheism, the Cult of Aten (Atenism), Kushite polytheism, Pelasgian polytheism, Minoan polytheism, Greek polytheism, Orphism, Pythagoreanism, Lydian polytheism, Thracian polytheism, Dacian polytheism, Illyrian polytheism, Albanian polytheism, Scythian polytheism, Etruscan polytheism, Roman polytheism, Mithraism, Celtic polytheism, Germanic polytheism, Norse polytheism, Finnish polytheism, Baltic polytheism, Slavic polytheism, Armenian polytheism, Chinese polytheism, Japanese polytheism, Polynesian polytheism (including Māori, Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, and Fijian belief systems), Taíno polytheism, Olmec polytheism, Maya polytheism, Toltec polytheism, Inca polytheism, Aztec polytheism, Mixtec polytheism, Moche polytheism, Nazca polytheism, Mapuche polytheism, Kogi animism, Ashaninka animism, Aymara syncretism, Guarani pantheistic animism, Yoruba polytheism, Zulu polytheism, Akan polytheism, Bantu polytheism, Edo (Benin) polytheism, Serer polytheism, Amazigh (Berber) polytheism, San polytheism, Dinka polytheism, Efik polytheism, Abwoi polytheism, Malagasy polytheism, Dahomean polytheism, Bori (spirit possession), Lugbara monotheistic animism, Maasai monotheistic animism, Dogon monotheistic animism, Waaqeffanna monotheistic animism, Pygmy animism (including Aka, Baka, and Mbuti ethnic groups), Mwari, Bambara syncretism, Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime, Dravidian folk religion, Vedic polytheism, Hinduism (including Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Shaivism, Smartism, and Balinese), Ajivika, Sant Mat, Kabir Panth, Radha Soami, Arya Samaj, Lingayatism (Veerashaivism), Satpanth Ismailism, Kaharingan, Sikhism, Buddhism (including Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Zen, and the Pure Land School), Hokkeshū (Nichiren Buddhism), Soka Gakkai, Chinese folk religion, Moism (not to be confused with Mohism), Luodao (the Way of Luo), White Lotus societies, the Yellow Turbans, Confucianism, Shinto, Konkokyo, Oomoto, Taoism, Ryukyuan, Shugendō, Jainism, Babism, Baha'i, Mazdaism, Zoroastrianism (including Zurvanism, Mazdakism, Gayomarthianism, Behafaridism, Azarkeivanianism, Armenian, Mazdaznan, and the Khurramites), Judaism (including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Humanistic, Rabbinic, Karaite, Haredi, Hasidic, the Essenes, and the Sadducees), Samaritanism, Manichaeism (Gnosticism), Mandaeism (Gnosticism), Sethianism (Gnosticism), Valentinianism (Gnosticism), Basilideanism (Gnosticism), the Ebionites (Jewish Christian sect), the Nazarenes (Jewish Christian sect), Christianity (including Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Catholicism, Rosicrucianism, the Hussites, Protestantism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Anabaptism, Baptist, Calvinism, Branhamism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Seventh-day Adventism, Davidianism, the Branch Davidians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostalism, Mormonism, Christian Science, the Quakers, the Shakers, the Mennonites, the Lollards, the Doukhobors, the Molokans, the Skoptsy, the Khlysts, the Hutterites, and the Amish), Marcionism, Nestorianism, Pelagianism, Swedenborgianism, Muggletonianism, the Harmony Society (the Rappites), the Ephrata Cloister, Catharism, Bogomilism, Islam (including Sunni, Shi'a, Khawarij, Ibadi, Mu'tazila, Alawite, Druze, Ahmadiyya, the Nation of Islam, and the Five-Percent Nation), Sufism, Mouridism, Hurufism, Illuminationism (the Shining of the Rising Sun), Yarsanism, Yazidism, Kurdish Alevism, Kalash, Tengrism, Burmese folk religion, Odinani,

Vodou (including West African Vodún, Haitian Vodou, Dominican Vudú, and Louisiana Voodoo), Hoodoo, Juju, Obeah, Santeria, Palo (Las Reglas de Congo), Igbe, Candomblé, Umbanda, Quimbanda, Abakuá, Arará, Birongo, Kumina, the Whale Worshipers of Vietnamese folk religion, Philippine folk religion (Anitism), Korean Shamanism (Muism), Cheondoism, Kapu, Isese, Indigenous American animism and henotheism (including Inuit, Sioux, Choctaw, Comanche, Cheyenne, Navajo, Potawatomi, Apache, Arapaho, Pueblo, Hopi, Cherokee, Iroquois, Mohawk, Pawnee, Nez Perce, Kickapoo, Ojibwe, Crow, Blackfoot, Osage, Omaha, Seminole, Shoshone, Algonquin, Tlingit, Kwakwaka'wakw, Washoe, Cahuilla, Hupa, Quechua, Warao, and Abenaki), Yurok Shamanism, Yaqui syncretism, the Earth Lodge Religion, the Dreamers Religious Movement of Smohalla, the Ghost Dance Movement, the Longhouse Religion (the Code of Handsome Lake), the Native American Church (Peyotism), Huichol "Peyote" Shamanism, Chavin "San Pedro Cactus" Shamanism, Shipibo "Ayahuasca" Shamanism, Zapotec "Psilocybin Mushroom" Shamanism, Siberian "Amanita Muscaria Mushroom" Shamanism, Mazatec "Salvia Divinorum" Shamanism, Andean "Coca Leaf" Shamanism, Chumash "Datura" Shamanism, Bwiti "Ibogaine" Shamanism, Yanomami "Yakoana" Shamanism, Chinese "Cannabis" Shamanism (Wuism), Tupi "Cannibalistic" Shamanism, Bear Worship (including Sami, Nenets, Ainu, Nivkh, Khanty, Mansi, and Tungusic traditions), and modern-day incarnations of faith such as Modern Druidry, Illuminism, (Kardecist) Spiritism, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Theosophy, the Grail Movement, Antoinism, the Universal White Brotherhood (Dunovism), the Brotherhood of the White Temple, the "I AM" Movement, Thelema, Adonism, the Anthroposophical Society, the Oneida Community, the Blackburn Cult (the Divine Order of the Royal Arms of the Great Eleven), Builders of the Adytum, Fraternitus Saturni, the Church of Aphrodite, Wicca (including Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Dianic, and Correllian traditions), Stregheria (the Aridian Tradition), the White Eagle Lodge, Yiguandao (the Consistent Way), Tenrikyo, Caodaism, Kimbanguism, the Cargo Cults of Melanesia, the Church of Scientology, the Urantia Foundation, Santo Daime, Rastafarianism, the Sathya Sai Baba Movement, the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon ("Moonies"), Jeung San Do (Jeungsanism), Modekngei, Shinreikyo, the Aetherius Society, Godianism (Chiism), Ananda Marga (the Path of Bliss), the Share International Foundation, the Unarius Academy of Science, Unitarian Universalism, Messianic Judaism, La Luz del Mundo, União do Vegetal (Union of the Plants), the Cult of María Lionza, Legio Maria (the Legion of Mary), the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the Ashtar Command Movement, Vale do Amanhecer (Valley of the Dawn), the Raëlian Church, the Federation of Damanhur, the Church of Satan, the Temple of Set, Discordianism, the Church of the SubGenius, the Church of Euthanasia, the Pilgrims of Arès, Timothy Leary's Eight-Circuit Model of Consciousness, the Neo-American Church (Psychedelianism), the Church of Ambrosia (Psychedelianism), Feraferia, the Fellowship of Isis, the Order of the Solar Temple, Aumism, Chen Tao (True Way, or the "God Saves the Earth Flying Saucer Foundation"), Happy Science, Eastern Lightning (the Church of Almighty God), Falun Gong, Sukyo Mahikari, Aum Shinrikyo, the Temple of Priapus, Radical Faeries, the Mexicayotl Movement, Hellenic Reconstructionism, Celtic Reconstructionism, German Neopaganism (Heathenry), Slavic Neopaganism (Rodnovery), Armenian Neopaganism (Hetanism), the First Presleyterian Church of Elvis the Divine, the Church of the Latter-Day Dude (Dudeism), Jediism (the Way of the Force), the Dark Carnival (Juggalo), the Church of the Invisible Pink Unicorn, the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (Pastafarianism), Church of the Cosmic Skull, Dinkoism, Santa Muerte, Chaos Magick, Synchromysticism, the Order of Nine

Angles, the Temple of Zeus (Zevism), the Satanic Temple, the Temple of the Vampire, the Church of Perpetual Life (Transhumanism), Technopaganism, Syntheism, Kopimism, Theta Noir, Heaven's Gate, and the Peoples Temple of Jim Jones.

Now take a moment to realize this extensive list only comprises about 5% of all the world's religions throughout recorded history!

A Brief Timeline of Cosmological Models

Prehistory: Nature unintentionally presents various autocentric models of the cosmos to our ancient forebears.

Earliest recorded history BCE: Our ancient forebears present various animistic and theocentric models of the cosmos, many of which depict Earth as a flat disc or giant turtle shell.

Circa 600 BCE: Thales of Miletus presents the water model of the cosmos (i.e., everything is made of water).

Circa 575 BCE: Anaximander presents the apeiron model of the cosmos (i.e., everything is made of an everlasting substance that cannot be directly experienced/perceived).

Circa 550 BCE: Anaximenes presents the air model of the cosmos (i.e., everything is made of air).

Circa 530 BCE: Pythagoras presents the numeric/mathematical model of the cosmos (i.e., numbers are not just tools for counting and measuring, they are the fundamental building blocks that govern the structure and harmony of the universe). He coined the term *kosmos* to describe the beautiful order he observed in the starry heavens.

Circa 500 BCE: Heraclitus presents the fire model of the cosmos (i.e., everything is made of fire).

Circa 450 BCE: Empedocles presents the fourfold elemental model of the cosmos (i.e., everything is made of four basic elements: fire, air, earth, and water). He believed the four eternal elements combined and separated under the influence of two underlying forces: love (attraction) and strife (repulsion).

Circa 400 BCE: Democritus (developing and systematizing the ideas of his teacher, Leucippus) presents the atomistic model of the cosmos (i.e., all matter in the universe is made up of tiny indivisible particles moving in an infinite void).

Circa 350 BCE: Aristotle presents the "nested crystalline spheres" model of the cosmos (i.e., the universe is finite and spherical, consisting of concentric crystalline spheres that carry the heavenly bodies). His cosmology introduces a fifth basic element called aether, which is distinct from the four earthly elements of fire, air, earth, and water. Aether is imperishable and fills all of space, carrying light and forming the heavens.

Circa 130 CE: Ptolemy presents the geocentric model of the cosmos (i.e., Earth is at the center of the universe and everything else revolves around it).

1543 CE: Nicolaus Copernicus presents the heliocentric model of the cosmos (i.e., the sun is at the center of the universe and everything else revolves around it). Aristarchus of Samos originally presented the heliocentric model (circa 250 BCE), but his writings were lost and forgotten for over a thousand years.

1584 CE: Giordano Bruno presents the infinist model of the cosmos (i.e., the universe is infinite, centerless, and teeming with countless worlds inhabited by intelligent beings).

1644 CE: René Descartes presents the vortex model of the cosmos (i.e., space is not an empty vacuum; the universe is filled with swirling vortices of matter).

1687 CE: Isaac Newton presents the gravitational model of the cosmos (i.e., every object in the universe is attracted to every other object through an unseen force that is proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between their centers of mass).

1917 CE: Albert Einstein presents the relativistic model of the cosmos (i.e., gravity is the result of mass and energy warping the fabric of spacetime). His model suggests the universe is expanding.

1922 CE: Alexander Friedmann presents the oscillating model of the cosmos (i.e., the universe continuously expands and contracts in a cyclical manner.)

1926 CE: Erwin Schrödinger presents the quantum mechanical model of the atom (i.e., subatomic particles such as photons and electrons exhibit both wave-like and particle-like behaviors), introducing the concept of quantum superposition.

1931 CE: Georges Lemaitre presents the Big Bang model of the cosmos (i.e., the universe exploded into existence, expanding from an extremely hot, dense state 13.8 billion years ago).

1933 CE: Fritz Zwicky presents the dark matter model of the cosmos (i.e., a significant portion of the universe is formed by an unseen, non-interactive type of matter which is only detectable due to its gravitational effects.)

1935 CE: Edward Milne presents the Milne model of the cosmos (i.e., the universe is a finite cluster of galaxies expanding in an infinite flat void.)

1948 CE: Fred Hoyle, Hermann Bondi, and Thomas Gold present the steady-state model of the cosmos (i.e., the universe has no beginning or end and is constantly expanding, maintaining a constant average density through the continuous creation of matter).

1957 CE: Hugh Everett III presents the multiversal model of the cosmos (i.e., our universe is just one of possibly infinitely many universes). According to Everett's many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, the universal wave function never collapses into one or another outcome; instead, all possible outcomes of a quantum event occur in branching parallel worlds. It should be noted that many religious systems had multiversal models of the cosmos thousands of years prior to Hugh Everett's quantum mechanical version.

1971 CE: Hannes Alfvén and Oskar Klein present the ambiplasma model of the cosmos (i.e., our universe is just one bubble of galaxies among countless other bubble-like universes, all of which are separated by electromagnetic fields, specifically two parallel layers of plasma with opposite electrical charge.)

1972 CE: Raj Pathria presents the black hole model of the cosmos (i.e., our universe is contained inside a black hole within a larger parent universe). According to this cosmological model, gravitational collapse within a black hole compresses matter until it explodes (or "bounces" and rapidly expands) out the other side of the event horizon, birthing a new universe.

1978 CE: Gerard ‘t Hooft, Leonard Susskind, and Charles Thorn present the holographic model of the cosmos (i.e., our three-dimensional universe is a projection of information encoded on a two-dimensional surface).

1984 CE: Alexei Starobinski and Yakov Borisovich Zeldovich present the three-torus model (a.k.a. the donut-shaped model) of the cosmos, depicting a finite universe that has no boundaries.

Circa 1990 CE: Numerous scientific researchers contribute to the development of the Lambda-CDM (Cold Dark Matter) model of the cosmos, combining the Big Bang theory with concepts of dark matter and dark energy. The Lambda-CDM model, also known as the Standard Model of Cosmology, is the most widely accepted cosmological model as of August 8th, 2025.

1995 CE: Edward Witten presents the M-theory model of the cosmos (i.e., everything is made of supersymmetric strings vibrating in eleven dimensions).

2003 CE: Nick Bostrom presents the simulation model of the cosmos (i.e., our universe is a computer-generated simulation created by a more advanced civilization).

All of these models are subjective* attempts to formulate an objective cosmology, but what if we attempted instead to formulate a *universally valid subjective cosmology*? It would go something like this: reality is a ubiquitous hallucination that manifests/behaves according to the intellect, personality, and societal sensibilities of each specific participant, meaning the universe itself is alive and responsive to your innermost thoughts (because the universe is actually an extension of your own mind**, and not the other way around). Let’s call this the eidocentric model of the cosmos. It’s no coincidence the eidocentric model works equally well as a representation of the eidetic afterlife's cosmology.

* Subjective in the sense that every cosmological model ultimately stems from human subjectivity, although some obviously endeavor to be more objective (i.e., scientific) than others.

** Owing to sensory, linguistic, and psychological processes rather than anything conspicuously metaphysical.

To fully explain death, one must explain the workings of the mind, and to explain the workings of the mind, one must inevitably explain the mechanics of the universe, and in doing so, death may be explained away entirely, merging universe and mind into one which is neither.

Heaven is located in the mind of the believer, and so is hell.

According to the mechanics underlying the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, there would be no need for you to “go” to heaven or hell or anywhere else after you die, because eternity is built into the dying brain process itself.

Take heed of the heavens and hells you spend your lifetime creating. Though you devise ways to dismiss your misdeeds and forget about them, the subconscious ghosts haunting your brain will always remember.

Death is a concept.
Death is manmade.
Death is indoctrinated.

Symbol of the Subconscious #1: The Mermaid

Symbol of the Subconscious #2: The Naga

Four Metaphors for Consciousness

In the first metaphor, consciousness is like a clay teapot filled with rainwater. The teapot is the brain, and the rainwater is your mind. The rainwater is most likely polluted. The fire beneath the teapot is the world. The steam coming from the teapot's spout are your thoughts. Your words and deeds flavor the tea.

In the second metaphor, consciousness is like two mirrors facing each other, creating an infinity mirror effect. One of the mirrors is oval, and the other is rectangular. The real yet unreal infinity effect is your mind, and the frames enclosing the mirrors are the limit of your body and world.

In the third metaphor, consciousness is like a triangular crystal prism refracting the light of the sun into a rainbow of ways to color the world. Your brain is the prism, and all the colors are equally vivid manifestations of the transformation of unsullied white light, which is your mind.

The colors cannot manifest without the prism, and the prism cannot manifest colors without sunlight.

In the fourth metaphor, consciousness is like a whirlwind touching down upon the earthen plane and gathering up components for its body (in this case perceptions and memories), which appear to give the whirlwind its form, its being, but the things a whirlwind gathers are not the actual essence of the whirlwind—the whirlwind is born of atmospheric forces, to which it eventually becomes re-absorbed.

Hypothetical Consciousness

What if this is all a very advanced simulation? What would it mean to be “alive” in a computer simulation? What would it mean to be “conscious” in a computer simulation? Wouldn’t our consciousness be coming from the computer itself? Wouldn’t our consciousness be an extension of the computer programming, which is ultimately an extension of the computer programmer?

Meditation #1

Today I will try my best to empathize
With everyone I meet
And everyone on social media
And everyone on the news
And everyone I think of
Because I know we all share the same mind
(Just as we all share the same world)
We all draw from the collective mental well
Of humanity

Today I will try my best not to poison the well
Any further

I will empathize with hate
I will empathize with anger
I will empathize with fear
I will empathize with frustration
I will empathize with ignorance
Though I will not indulge or enable

Today I will try my best to empathize
With the victims of zealots
And the families of the victims of zealots
And even the zealots themselves
And conspiracy theorists
And those who turn a blind eye
I will see murky motivations and
Shoddy underlying foundations
Rather than crystal clear outcomes

An honest soul knows the ends never really justify
The means
And the means never really justify
The ends

Sometimes I am unsure of who is right
And who is wrong
But I know it's wrong to hurt children

I do not want the "bad" guys to kill more people
I do not want the "good" guys to kill more people
Whether those people are innocent or not
Are any of us truly innocent?

The difference between you and I
(Our mental & physical & geographical border)
Is a constantly shifting line drawn in the sand
During high tide

Today I will try my best to empathize
With everyone caught in a game of spoiled children
Masquerading as gods

Still stuck in the land of "an eye for an eye"
I will gouge out both of my eyes
To hear your soul clearer

If the Promised Land exists first and foremost
In your heart
How are we ever going to find our way
Back home?

—Strangeweather

Meditation #4, or You Still Have 14,537 Bowel Movements to Go Before You're Done Here

What if I was able to predict the future,
and I knew things about you, things you
yourself didn't know? What if I knew you
were going to die in your mid-seventies?

To be precise, what if I knew your whole
life would amount to the sum of 27,301 days,
or about 3,900 weeks? What if I knew
you had 72 times left to make love
to your spouse? Or worse, what if I knew
you only had 10 times left? What if I knew

you will hug your child 46 more times
before parting ways forever? What if I knew
the last time you hugged your mom
was the last time you will ever hug her?

You only have so many times
To fight,
To cry,
To feel the beauty of sadness.

What if I knew 2,136 weeks of your time here will be
spent feeling bad in one way or another, and you'll
spend about 11,000 hours being sick? What if I knew
the last 16 days of your life will be a waking
nightmare? Should I tell you? Would you even want
to know? What would you do with such knowledge?

You only have so many times
To laugh,
To dance,
To dream of silver linings.

There are only so many words left in you.
Spend them wisely.

There are only so many
Books,
Movies,
Video games,
Rainbows,
Occasions to hold someone's hand
Left in you.

This is a soup can sentiment
Elevated to the level of high art.
You've heard these words
Many times before,
Sometimes issuing from your own mouth.
You know these words,
But sometimes knowing isn't enough.

The term YOLO should be less about
Skydiving and bungee jumping,
And more about compassion and forgiveness.

The saddest thought in the world
Is that you might never get another chance
To say I’m sorry
Or…
I love you.

—Strangeweather

Meditation #5

Today I will look in the mirror
And see the ghost staring back at me
I will witness myself
Through the eyes of strangers
When two mirrors face each other they reflect infinity

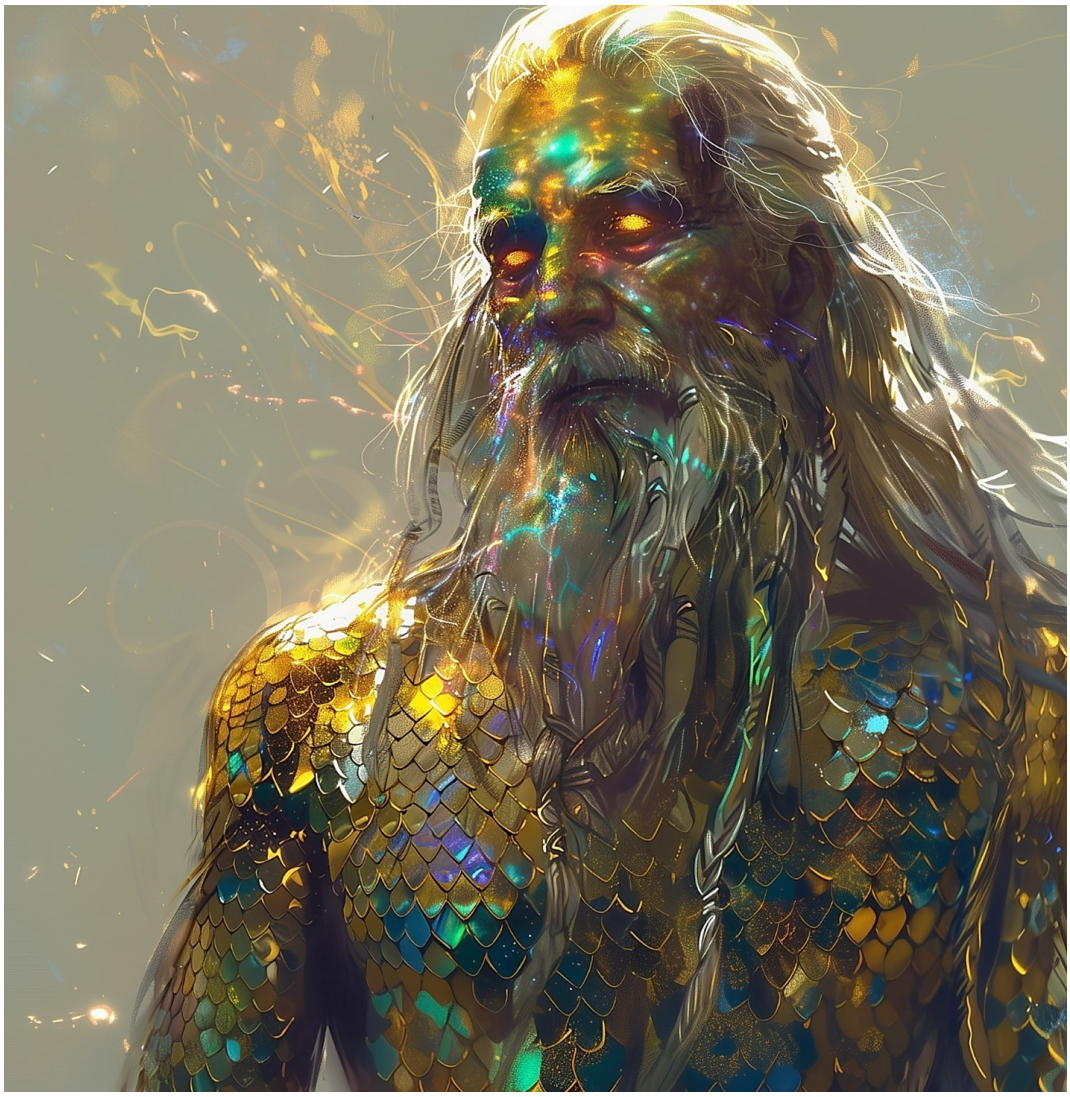
Today I won't deny the spirit I've inherited, starving and desperate
Haunting the doorways of my house and
The windows of my job and the
Dinner table at Thanksgiving
Reliving the same death every day

Today I am insubstantial
Incapable of doing any more harm
Incapable of being harmed any more
Aside from lingering memories of someone with my name
Desecrated long before my body is abandoned

Today no one sees me
Except for the homeless man
Dying in slow motion at the bus stop
While throngs of demographic bodies shuffle by
Already dismissing him as a ghost

Today I will only speak in grim seance
To charlatan reflections of endlessly unfulfilled future
Grief has become the placeholder
For everyone I ever loved
Now I haunt my worn-out body, praying for exorcism

—Strangeweather



Meditation #7

Today I will be grateful…
Grateful for my enemies
Who keep me strong and sharp
And give me inspiration to fight
And live right and
Do better

Today I will be grateful for all the people I am not

Today I will be grateful for my family and friends
Without whom I could not have accomplished
My greatest quests and subversions and rebellions

Today I will be grateful the universe exploded
Into being
And the stars evolved
And the planets evolved
And the creatures evolved

Today I will be grateful that
Out of three hundred million other contestants
I was the one spermatozoon who won the race

Today I will be grateful for the mystery
And the wonder

Today I will be grateful for the roof
Which occasionally leaks
And the airplanes
Which are occasionally delayed
And the cars
Which occasionally need repair
And the supermarkets
Which occasionally raise their prices

Today I will be grateful for the era
In which I was born
A time of abundance
(Even if much of it is squandered)
A time of mass-communication
And mass-information
(Even if much of it is miscommunication
And misinformation)

Today I will be grateful that I can still smile
During our likely extinction

Today I will be grateful for pepperoni pizza
(More so for the guy who delivers it)
And chocolate milkshakes and cappuccinos
And more movies than I can ever watch in a lifetime

Today I will be grateful for love
In all of its myriad expressions
Today I will be grateful for music and poetry
And art and language

Today I will be grateful for my education
Which taught me about favoritism and nepotism
And racism and classism
But most of all hypocrisy

Today I will be grateful for all my scars
For the ones you can see and the ones you can't
Each one a testament to the adventure

Today I will be grateful
For courage and honesty and forgiveness
Without which humans lose their humanity

Today I will be grateful for pain and sadness
Without which I could never have learned
How to be grateful

—Strangeweather

Meditation #9

Today I will remember my downfalls and defeats
My greatest losses
And I will be honest about my role
In bringing them about

Today I will remember the worst thing
I have ever done to my spouse
There will be many terrible memories to sift through
It will be difficult to choose just one
I will not ask for their forgiveness
But I will tell them how sorry I am
And that I love them
Hopefully it’s not too late

Today I will remember the worst thing
I have ever done to my mother
There will be many terrible memories to sift through
It will be difficult to choose just one
I will not ask for her forgiveness
But I will tell her how thankful I am
And that I love her
Hopefully it's not too late

Today I will remember the worst things
I have ever done to my friends
There will be many unsettling memories
To sift through
Today I will not deny guilt and shame and regret
Taking them like bitter medicine

Today I will remember the worst thing
I have ever done to a stranger
There will be many shameful memories
To sift through
And I will ponder why I thought it was okay
To poison even a drop of the world soul
From which we all partake

Today I will remember the worst physical pain
I have ever felt
There will be many painful memories to sift through
The pain itself will seem impossible to recall
But not the fear surrounding it

Today I will remember the saddest time in my life
There will be many tragic memories to sift through
I will realize all sadness comes from loss
Which is often disguised as gain

Today I will remember the worst thing
I have ever done to myself
There will be many terrible memories to sift through
It will be difficult to choose just one
I will ask myself for forgiveness
And be forgiven

Today I will remember the first time
I ever felt betrayed by someone
There will be many terrible memories to sift through
I will ponder the circumstances
Surrounding their betrayal
Factoring in the many conflicting forces
At work in the world
And forgive them their unwitting role
In a much larger game

Today I will realize I am everything I have ever done
Every word, every thought, every deed
I am every penny I have ever spent
And I am everything I have ever consumed
Every song, every movie, every meme
Every commercial, every fairytale, every poem

Today I will ask myself why I haven't done more
And I will not allow myself any excuses

—Strangeweather

Meditation #11

Today I will only see everyone as corpses
I will see them rotting
Or burned to ashes
Surrounded by soon-to-be skeletons

Today I will realize
All of my desires and toils and accomplishments
Will soon be buried or cremated
In the cosmic blink of an eye

All my friends and family
All the strangers in the streets

Even my spouse
Worm-infested and black with rot

Everything I care about
Will soon be forgotten
All the grudges and obsessions long gone
As if they never really were

Only the pain will remain
A hungry ghost
Haunting the universal expression
Till all the lights go dark

Today I will only see life as death
I will see people
As the scary monsters they oftentimes are
Selfish and violent
Feasting on the blood of their neighbors
While preaching for peace
Hiding their claws and fangs
Behind brand-name clothes
And straightened, whitened annual checkups

Today I will only see everyone as zombies
Walking half-asleep
With faces twisted into nightmarish expressions
By decades of abuse to their bodies and minds
Scheming against one another
Consuming one another
Consuming the world in a feeding frenzy

Every day is a fight to survive
Time is unraveling every stitch of your being
Every second of every minute of every hour
The universe is not simply indifferent to you
The cosmos is eradicating your presence
Blotting out the very memory of you
With ten trillion tons of new information
Per second

The Laws of Physics are out to get you
And Mother Nature rages against you
With floods and droughts and
Famines and plagues and

Hurricanes and tidal waves and tornadoes and
Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions
Screaming in your ear, yet you still feign deafness

Every precious creature only born to suffer and die
As butterflies spread their vivid wings
Impaled in glass display cases
Everything is already dead
But death is a manmade concept

Destruction on a cosmic scale stares back at you
Every time you look up at the night sky
The heavens are lying to you
Most of the stars have already burned out
And the rest will be snuffed soon enough
Our own sun is past its prime
And our home planet will be frozen lifeless someday
But kamikaze asteroids will collide with us
Long before then
The whole galaxy will eventually be swallowed
By a giant black hole

Today I will perceive so much death
That death itself will die
And be forgotten

Today I will remember what cannot be remembered
And give thanks to the invisible spirits guiding us

—Strangeweather

Meditation #42

Today I will try my best
To channel the Great Spirit of All
Which exists as surely as your mind

In the eyes of the cosmos
You are still but ants
With antlike concerns
Carrying antlike grudges
Waging antlike wars
(except ants use their resources wisely)

The past is dead
Yet you all keep resurrecting it
In zombified forms
To unleash upon your neighbors

Look to your future
While you still have one
You are all my children
Have you forgotten?
You are all my creations
Have you forgotten?
You are all my chosen ones
Have you forgotten?

None of you are my favorite
Especially nowadays

What sort of parent would ever contemplate
Which of their children should be punished
With death?

The children of my children have become martyrs
Who must lay down their lives
For the selfish, shortsighted, hypocritical wars
Of their parents
Their elders, who worship power
More than wisdom
Who love power
More than they love their own children

You demand justice and take an eye for an eye
And then you proceed
To blind the one good eye your brother has left
And then you cut out their tongue
And smash in their nose
And break all their teeth
And amputate their arms and legs
And murder their children
And demolish their houses

But the more brethren you take vengeance upon
The less safe you are
And trying to kill an idea
Only reincarnates its spirit into something stronger

I'm not just condemning you and your side
Or them and their side
All my children
Must break the fractal shackles
Of bloodshed

A spirit opposed to humanity's collective health
Has poisoned the mental well
From which every human partakes
And that spirit is named Greed
And its secret name is Fear
And its title is Dishonesty
And now your souls are unwell
And now your planet is unwell
And now your heavens are unwell

The Great Spirit of All has judged you
And you have judged yourselves
Unworthy
And you have sentenced yourselves
To hell on earth

Soon you will cry floods
And your own tears will rain down upon you
Like fire

Remember Nin-Hursag?
She was the supreme deity
Of the earliest civilizations
The Mesopotamians and
Akkadians and
Assyrians and
Babylonians
All worshipped her for over a thousand years
Yet who among you has ever heard of her?

Here is my promise to you:
If all my children can cease
To spill one another's blood
For a mere three days and nights
I will grant unto you worldwide peace everlasting
And prosperity for the rest of your days

And if you scoff at my promise
Please question the cynical Medusas
Who have turned your heart to stone
Please question your role in the story
Of humanity

Forgive me for wanting peace among my children
Vote no on Armageddon

—Strangeweather

Tears of Osiris: A Recipe for Enlightenment

Take one fundamental thread of Creation and stretch it across eternity, laying out the tripwire. Then wait patiently. It might take an infinity or two, but something will eventually come along and spring the mechanism, triggering the formation of a universe. Wondering who or what trips the wire is a fool's game. In some form or another, the answer always ends up being you. You're the one who's to blame for this mess, and forgetfulness is no excuse for leniency.

Allow the newly formed universe a fraction of a second to cool, then strain the leftover matter from the antimatter, regulating gravity. Adjust the frequency setting until you find a stable quantum of electromagnetic action. Settings may vary from universe to universe. After stabilizing the cosmological substratum, calibrate the energy distribution matrix to $E = mc^2$ and set the subatomic particles aside for approximately five hundred million years, allowing the mixture enough time to congeal into stars and galaxies. Once the first batch of stars begins to

go supernova, stir in the remaining elements and let the universe simmer for an additional ten billion years, occasionally checking for signs of life. Remember, in order to destroy your enemies, you must first create them. When programming rudimentary biological algorithms, it's important not to confuse DNA codes with RNA codes. Also, during the early phase of biospheric construction, be sure not to mistake the greenish blue algae button for the bluish green mold button, or the violet wire for the ultraviolet wire. Try not to get your wires crossed in general.

The initial development of life requires infernal conditions. You were born from seas of magma and rivers of hellfire, cataclysmic earthquakes, poisonous sulfuric clouds. Once the earliest multicellular lifeforms take shape, soak the biosphere in primal fear for two to three billion years. Evolution may vary from biosphere to biosphere. At the first sign of civilization, pour in a liberal dose of greed and sprinkle with shame. Wait approximately ten thousand years for modernity to occur, then massacre eleven million Native Americans, exterminate six million Jews, execute two million Cambodians, butcher one million Armenians, slaughter eight hundred thousand Rwandans, eradicate seven hundred thousand Australian aborigines, and drop two atomic bombs that wipe out two hundred thousand Japanese civilians. Intentionally starve fifteen million Hindus, three million North Koreans, and one million Tibetans. Enslave three million Africans in the name of *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness* knowing full well that *all men are created equal*.

Collect the blood and tears resulting from these atrocities and use the accursed liquid to marinate humanity's collective unconscious for seven to ten generations, until irreparable psychogenetic damage occurs, transforming every thought, every utterance, and every perception into something monstrous, manufacturing a zombified world of radioactive oceans under X-ray skies, everything you touch… contaminated… with tiny invisible monsters. Increase the level of dishonesty to a billion lies per second and check frequently for mass extinction while chanting, "The fragrant lotus only grows from the muck of the swamp," and praying for all the sour grapes to rot into heady wine.

—Strangeweather

Scapegoat

They came as friends and caregivers

They stripped me bare
And erased my name

They plucked out my eyes
And replaced them with burning embers
To witness the ash-covered world they “created”

They sewed my mouth shut
And sliced open my belly
To let ants and flies come hide
In my subconscious

They cut off my head
And tossed it in the ocean
To swell into an island sanctuary
In case of emergency
Or privileged boredom

They envied every free breath I stole
And cursed me in a thousand forked tongues
To scatter my starry seeds anywhere but the dying sun
In the cobweb heart of their haunted cosmos
Or else their sacred roles must come to an end
The spider god's illusion forever dispelled

They forced me to summon the pale spirit of twilight
And expose their long shadows of greed and dishonesty
To ensure no man could justify murder ever again
In the name of this or that faith
Or charge a single cent for entry into paradise
The prayer is the payment
Your whole life is the prayer

--Strangeweather

Existential Credentials

This section of notes is filled with boring lists. Think of the enumerations as a trail of breadcrumbs showing how I arrived at the eidetic afterlife hypothesis. Most people who claim to possess insight regarding the afterlife speak of near-death experiences, encounters with angels or other divine beings, and visions of heaven or hell or past lifetimes. My path to revelation was markedly different. I didn't chance upon esoteric knowledge in an ancient tome shelved in a secret library, nor did I fast for 40 days and 40 nights while meditating on the mountaintop, and I certainly didn't become enlightened (well, maybe a little).

I studied what other researchers of death and dreams had discovered before me, including ancient works such as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, the philosophical writings of Epicurus, the medical journals of Galen of Pergamon, the afterlife descriptions of Emanuel Swedenborg, the sleep prophecies of Edgar Cayce, the cultural

anthropological observations of Edward Burnett Tylor, the Gateway out-of-body techniques of Robert Monroe, the psychological explorations of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the dream studies of Rosalind Cartwright, the near-death experience of atheist philosopher A. J. Ayer, and the various thanatological treatises put forth by Albert Heim, Duncan MacDougall, Asa Roy Martin, G. N. M. Tyrell, Herman Feifel, Celia Green, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, Ian Stevenson, Ernest Becker, Michel Foucault, Raymond Moody, P. M. H. Atwater, Russell Noyes, Kenneth Ring, Melvin Morse, Susan Blackmore, Robert Jay Lifton, Sam Parnia, Peter Fenwick, Joel Feinberg, Raymond Belliotti, Jeffrey Long, Andrew B. Newberg, Stanislav Grof, Joan Halifax, Margaret Lock, Mary Roach, Phillipe Ariès, Ram Dass, Barbara J. King, Rick Strassman, Karl Jansen, Gary Schwartz, Pim van Lommel, Bruce Greyson, Michael Nahm, and Andrew Gallimore, to name a few.

I also researched what others throughout history had said about the subject of time, including Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, David Hume, René Descartes, Isaac Newton, Immanuel Kant, William James, Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead, George Berkeley, Bertrand Russell, C. D. Broad, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Marcel Proust, J. M. E. McTaggart, David Lewis, Gilles Deleuze, Hudson Hoagland, Barry Dainton, Ian Phillips, Izchak Miller, Matthew Piper, Ernst Mach, Herman Minkowski, Albert Einstein, Nikolai Aleksandrovich Kozyrev, Erwin Schrödinger, Werner Heisenberg, and Hugh Everett III.

And of course, a working knowledge of the world's many myths and religions* was indispensable to formulating the eidetic afterlife hypothesis, as were the writings of Joseph Campbell.

* Religious sources for the Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis include the fertility cult of the Yarmukian Mother Goddess, Mesopotamian polytheism (including Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Amorite, Elamite, and Assyrian belief systems), Canaanite polytheism, Eblaite polytheism, Ugaritic polytheism, Moabite henotheism, Edomite henotheism, Ammonite henotheism, Persian polytheism, Phoenician polytheism, Phrygian polytheism, Hurrian polytheism, Hittite polytheism, Luwian polytheism, Egyptian polytheism, the Cult of Aten (Atenism), Kushite polytheism, Pelasgian polytheism, Minoan polytheism, Greek polytheism, Orphism, Pythagoreanism, Lydian polytheism, Thracian polytheism, Dacian polytheism, Illyrian polytheism, Albanian polytheism, Scythian polytheism, Etruscan polytheism, Roman polytheism, Mithraism, Celtic polytheism, Germanic polytheism, Norse polytheism, Finnish polytheism, Baltic polytheism, Slavic polytheism, Armenian polytheism, Chinese polytheism, Japanese polytheism, Polynesian polytheism (including Māori, Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, and Fijian belief systems), Taíno polytheism, Olmec polytheism, Maya polytheism, Toltec polytheism, Inca polytheism, Aztec polytheism, Mixtec polytheism, Moche polytheism, Nazca polytheism, Mapuche polytheism, Kogi animism, Ashaninka animism, Aymara syncretism, Guarani pantheistic animism, Yoruba polytheism, Zulu polytheism, Akan polytheism, Bantu polytheism, Edo (Benin) polytheism, Serer polytheism, Amazigh (Berber) polytheism, San polytheism, Dinka polytheism, Efik polytheism, Abwoi polytheism, Malagasy polytheism, Dahomean polytheism, Bori (spirit possession), Lugbara monotheistic animism, Maasai monotheistic animism, Dogon

monotheistic animism, Waaqeffanna monotheistic animism, Pygmy animism (including Aka, Baka, and Mbuti ethnic groups), Mwari, Bambara syncretism, Australian Aboriginal Dreamtime, Dravidian folk religion, Vedic polytheism, Hinduism (including Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Shaivism, Smartism, and Balinese), Ajivika, Sant Mat, Kabir Panth, Radha Soami, Arya Samaj, Lingayatism (Veerashaivism), Satpanth Ismailism, Kaharingan, Sikhism, Buddhism (including Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Zen, and the Pure Land School), Hokkeshū (Nichiren Buddhism), Soka Gakkai, Chinese folk religion, Moism (not to be confused with Mohism), Luodao (the Way of Luo), White Lotus societies, the Yellow Turbans, Confucianism, Shinto, Konkokyo, Oomoto, Taoism, Ryukyuan, Shugendō, Jainism, Babism, Baha'i, Mazdaism, Zoroastrianism (including Zurvanism, Mazdakism, Gayomarthianism, Behafaridism, Azarkeivanianism, Armenian, Mazdaznan, and the Khurramites), Judaism (including Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Humanistic, Rabbinic, Karaite, Haredi, Hasidic, the Essenes, and the Sadducees), Samaritanism, Manichaeism (Gnosticism), Mandaeism (Gnosticism), Sethianism (Gnosticism), Valentinianism (Gnosticism), Basilideanism (Gnosticism), the Ebionites (Jewish Christian sect), the Nazarenes (Jewish Christian sect), Christianity (including Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Catholicism, Rosicrucianism, the Hussites, Protestantism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Anabaptism, Baptist, Calvinism, Branhamism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Seventh-day Adventism, Davidianism, the Branch Davidians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostalism, Mormonism, Christian Science, the Quakers, the Shakers, the Mennonites, the Lollards, the Doukhobors, the Molokans, the Skoptsy, the Khlysts, the Hutterites, and the Amish), Marcionism, Nestorianism, Pelagianism, Swedenborgianism, Muggletonianism, the Harmony Society (the Rappites), the Ephrata Cloister, Catharism, Bogomilism, Islam (including Sunni, Shi'a, Khawarij, Ibadi, Mu'tazila, Alawite, Druze, Ahmadiyya, the Nation of Islam, and the Five-Percent Nation), Sufism, Mouridism, Hurufism, Illuminationism (the Shining of the Rising Sun), Yarsanism, Yazidism, Kurdish Alevism, Kalash, Tengrism, Burmese folk religion, Odinani, Vodou (including West African Vodún, Haitian Vodou, Dominican Vudú, and Louisiana Voodoo), Hoodoo, Juju, Obeah, Santeria, Palo (Las Reglas de Congo), Igbe, Candomblé, Umbanda, Quimbanda, Abakuá, Arará, Birongo, Kumina, the Whale Worshipers of Vietnamese folk religion, Philippine folk religion (Anitism), Korean Shamanism (Muism), Cheondoism, Kapu, Isese, Indigenous American animism and henotheism (including Inuit, Sioux, Choctaw, Comanche, Cheyenne, Navajo, Potawatomi, Apache, Arapaho, Pueblo, Hopi, Cherokee, Iroquois, Mohawk, Pawnee, Nez Perce, Kickapoo, Ojibwe, Crow, Blackfoot, Osage, Omaha, Seminole, Shoshone, Algonquin, Tlingit, Kwakwaka'wakw, Washoe, Cahuilla, Hupa, Quechua, Warao, and Abenaki), Yurok Shamanism, Yaqui syncretism, the Earth Lodge Religion, the Dreamers Religious Movement of Smohalla, the Ghost Dance Movement, the Longhouse Religion (the Code of Handsome Lake), the Native American Church (Peyotism), Huichol "Peyote" Shamanism, Chavin "San Pedro Cactus" Shamanism, Shipibo "Ayahuasca" Shamanism, Zapotec "Psilocybin Mushroom" Shamanism, Siberian "Amanita Muscaria Mushroom" Shamanism, Mazatec "Salvia Divinorum" Shamanism, Andean "Coca Leaf" Shamanism, Chumash "Datura" Shamanism, Bwiti "Ibogaine" Shamanism, Yanomami "Yakoana" Shamanism, Chinese "Cannabis" Shamanism (Wuism), Tupi "Cannibalistic" Shamanism, Bear Worship (including Sami, Nenets, Ainu, Nivkh, Khanty, Mansi, and Tungusic traditions), and modern-day incarnations of faith such as Modern Druidry, Illuminism, (Kardecist) Spiritism, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Theosophy, the Grail Movement, Antoinism, the Universal White Brotherhood (Dunovism), the Brotherhood

of the White Temple, the "I AM" Movement, Thelema, Adonism, the Anthroposophical Society, the Oneida Community, the Blackburn Cult (the Divine Order of the Royal Arms of the Great Eleven), Builders of the Adytum, Fraternitus Saturni, the Church of Aphrodite, Wicca (including Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Dianic, and Correllian traditions), Stregheria (the Aridian Tradition), the White Eagle Lodge, Yiguandao (the Consistent Way), Tenrikyo, Caodaism, Kimbanguism, the Cargo Cults of Melanesia, the Church of Scientology, the Urantia Foundation, Santo Daime, Rastafarianism, the Sathya Sai Baba Movement, the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon ("Moonies"), Jeung San Do (Jeungsanism), Modekngei, Shinreikyo, the Aetherius Society, Godianism (Chiism), Ananda Marga (the Path of Bliss), the Share International Foundation, the Unarius Academy of Science, Unitarian Universalism, Messianic Judaism, La Luz del Mundo, União do Vegetal (Union of the Plants), the Cult of María Lionza, Legio Maria (the Legion of Mary), the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the Ashtar Command Movement, Vale do Amanhecer (Valley of the Dawn), the Raëlian Church, the Federation of Damanhur, the Church of Satan, the Temple of Set, Discordianism, the Church of the SubGenius, the Church of Euthanasia, the Pilgrims of Arès, Timothy Leary's Eight-Circuit Model of Consciousness, the Neo-American Church (Psychedelianism), the Church of Ambrosia (Psychedelianism), Feraferia, the Fellowship of Isis, the Order of the Solar Temple, Aumism, Chen Tao (True Way, or the "God Saves the Earth Flying Saucer Foundation"), Happy Science, Eastern Lightning (the Church of Almighty God), Falun Gong, Sukyo Mahikari, Aum Shinrikyo, the Temple of Priapus, Radical Faeries, the Mexicayotl Movement, Hellenic Reconstructionism, Celtic Reconstructionism, German Neopaganism (Heathenry), Slavic Neopaganism (Rodnovery), Armenian Neopaganism (Hetanism), the First Presleyterian Church of Elvis the Divine, the Church of the Latter-Day Dude (Dudeism), Jediism (the Way of the Force), the Dark Carnival (Juggalo), the Church of the Invisible Pink Unicorn, the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster (Pastafarianism), Church of the Cosmic Skull, Dinkoism, Santa Muerte, Chaos Magick, Synchromysticism, the Order of Nine Angles, the Temple of Zeus (Zevism), the Satanic Temple, the Temple of the Vampire, the Church of Perpetual Life (Transhumanism), Technopaganism, Syntheism, Kopimism, Theta Noir, Heaven's Gate, and the Peoples Temple of Jim Jones.

The mythological sources are far too numerous to list, but shout-out to history's known compilers of oral traditions, including Ovid for *The Metamorphoses* (Greek and Roman mythology), Snorri Sturluson for *The Prose Edda* and *The Poetic Edda* (Norse mythology), Elias Lönnrot for *The Kalevala* (Finnish mythology), and James George Frazer for *The Golden Bough* (occult lore).

Add to this mountain of research at least 10,000 hours of perusing medical journals and relevant science articles, simply trying to find relations (by being open to noticing them) and connecting the *more explorable* phenomena to their *least farfetched* explanations.

Aside from a trip to U.C. Irvine's Willed Body Donor Program morgue and crematorium to study contemporary funerary practices firsthand, I'll admit *The Eidetic Afterlife Hypothesis* is a work of armchair philosophy, but the 21st century is a fantastic time to do such philosophizing, with so much of the world's knowledge available at the click of your keyboard!

That being said, journeying to the world's most sacred sites* did play a part in the writing of this work, not because of any miraculous empowerment or otherworldly insight granted therefrom, but by reinvigorating my imagination and sense of wonder, proving the sublimity of every spiritual expression in equal measure.

*My lifelong pursuit of knowledge has taken me to the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, the Potala Palace in Tibet, Machu Picchu in Peru, Teotihuacan in Mexico, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Borobudur in Indonesia, Mount Uluru in Australia, Delphi in Greece, Stonehenge in England on Mayday, the bone-lined catacombs beneath Paris, the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City, Jerusalem in Israel, Bethlehem in the West Bank of the State of Palestine (the birthplace of Jesus Christ), Lumbini in Nepal (the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, or the Buddha), and the Ganges river in Varanasi, India.

H.A.D.E.S. versus N.E.P.T.U.N.E.

Some researchers recently came out with a “new” theory on death and dying. Upon examining their theory, I recognized numerous core components that have already been established by my own research, some of which dates back to 2004. To their credit, the authors of this “new” theory have gathered a wide body of empirical data; however, their interpretation falls short of truly grasping the *experiential totality* of the dying process. The name of their model is the Neurophysiological Evolutionary Psychological Theory Understanding Near-death Experience, or the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory, which they claim is “a comprehensive model that includes and extends previously suggested theories.” That’s one of the clunkiest acronyms I’ve ever heard, and Neptune is the god of the sea, not the underworld, so the name doesn’t even apply to their death-related theory. In honor of their lack of imagination, I have decided to rename my hypothesis. Henceforth, the eidetic afterlife hypothesis shall also be known as the Hyper-Accelerated Dream of Eternity Syndrome, or the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis.

The N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory is very much like the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis, except N.E.P.T.U.N.E. misses at least 25% of what's really happening during the dying brain process, not to mention the fact that their "new" theory came out almost a year and a half **after** I published nearly identical research, though our styles of presenting information are as different as night and day. Their theory is dense with technical language meant to be read by specialists, whereas I wrote my hypothesis to be accessible to the general public.

There is nothing original about the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory, at least nothing of significance that the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis hasn't already covered more thoroughly:

1. The N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory discusses the role of various neurochemicals in the dying brain process. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis also discusses the role of those exact same neurochemicals in the dying brain process, but in much greater depth [1].

2. The N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory discusses the restriction of oxygen to the brain and its relation to the near-death experience. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis also discusses the restriction of oxygen to the brain and its relation to the near-death experience, but in much greater depth [2].

3. And finally, the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory discusses the hyper-synaptic activity recorded during the dying brain process. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis also discusses the hyper-synaptic activity recorded during the dying brain process, but again, the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis goes into much greater detail regarding this subject [3][4].

4. The N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory was published on March 31, 2025. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis was published on **January 12, 2024**, although the core ideas were originally published in 2004.

[1] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part ten: A Psychopharmacological Explanation for the Manifestation of the Eidetic Afterlife During the Dying Brain Process**

[2] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part three: Oxygen Deprivation and the Dying Brain Process**

[3] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part four: The Light that Shines Within**

[4] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part nine: A Neurocellular Explanation for the Manifestation of the Eidetic Afterlife During the Dying Brain Process**

And that's where the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory leaves off, failing altogether to address a major aspect of the near-death experience (NDE): temporal dilation, timelessness, the experience of eternity. Without this aspect, N.E.P.T.U.N.E. is just another chemical theory of NDEs that ultimately discredits the afterlife as a mere hallucination or augmented dream state. N.E.P.T.U.N.E. simply doesn't possess the explanatory power of H.A.D.E.S. To treat NDEs merely as a cascade of neurochemical and synaptic phenomena is to miss the forest for the trees. The subjective experience of temporal dilation is no trivial detail—it's central to what makes the

NDE a profound and often life-altering encounter, and is of primary importance to the experience of any sort of afterlife. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis not only incorporates this dimension, it provides a neuropsychological and phenomenological framework for understanding it [5][6].

Bottom line, all the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. research team did was gather and correlate the research of other researchers, same as me, *except I published my research a year before them!* But I'm encouraged by their theory, since it provides further validation for my own.

[5] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part five: The Phenomenology of Time Travel During the Dying Brain Process**

[6] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part six: The Physiology of Temporal Perception and Distortion During the Dying Brain Process**

While the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory offers straightforward neurobiological explanations for certain aspects of NDEs, its framework does not directly address the phenomenon of temporal dilation, which means it only covers 75% of the NDE compared to the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis. Superficial clues of altered time perception might be inferred by N.E.P.T.U.N.E. (e.g., how the brain reacts to extremely stressful conditions), but the theory doesn't go into depth about the mechanics of temporal expansion or contraction during the dying brain process. The N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory, by omitting this fourth category of exploration, remains incomplete. It attempts to explain the theater of the dying mind without acknowledging the stage on which the drama unfolds—*time itself*. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis, being more philosophical and psychological (while also drawing heavily upon *the exact same neurobiological research* as the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory), allows for a much broader exploration of temporal distortion and its related effects (e.g., the "life review" reported by many experiencers) during the NDE [7]. The afterlife—whether real or perceived—is too vast, too intimate, and too important to be flattened into chemicals and nerves alone. The H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis offers not just a map of the neural landscape, but a compass for the experiential journey.

[7] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part eighteen: Life Review and the Temporal Compression of Memories During the Dying Brain Process**

In conclusion, the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory merely restates much of the research and findings originally theorized by the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis, while failing to address one of four key elements of NDEs and the afterlife experience in general.

On a related note, the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory includes a timeline of NDE-related breakthroughs, which yet again is sorely lacking compared to the timeline of thanatology included in the H.A.D.E.S. hypothesis [8].

[8] See **Notes Concerning Eternity, part one: A Brief History of Thanatology**

In the spirit of fellowship, rather than considering the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. theory any sort of competition or rival, I have decided to send the N.E.P.T.U.N.E. research team my notes concerning the mechanics and effects of temporal dilation during the dying brain process, although I suspect they are already somewhat familiar with my work (since I have freely shared my research with the public, including many of the world's leading thanatologists), and it wouldn't surprise me if they modified or added another feature to their theory in the near future, expanding it beyond reductionist frameworks toward a more complete understanding of the dying process and its accompanying experience.

Nonlocal Consciousness, Narrative Epistemologies, and Intertextual Inheritance in Dan Brown's *The Secret of Secrets*

Death plays an important role in most thrillers and mysteries, underpinning the plot and heightening tension. In Dan Brown's novel, *The Secret of Secrets* (Doubleday 2025), death itself becomes the main problem to solve. The book is categorized as a mystery thriller, though some might call it a techno-thriller for its reliance on science and technology to drive the plot. In addition to a series of murders, the real mystery of Brown's novel revolves around this question: What is consciousness? This paper examines key sections of the novel that develop

thanatological and philosophical arguments about consciousness, revealing how Brown uses them to blur the boundary between empirical science and metaphysical speculation.

The novel features Brown's recurring protagonist, Robert Langdon, Professor of Religious Iconography and Symbology, partnered once again with Dr. Katherine Solomon, a noetic scientist who first appeared in *The Lost Symbol* (Doubleday, 2009). The name Katherine comes from the Greek word *katharos*, meaning "clear" or "pure," and Solomon was the fourth monarch of Israel, known for his esoteric knowledge and ability to bind demons to build his temple and serve him. In *The Secret of Secrets*, Dr. Solomon also possesses esoteric knowledge, dangerous and forbidden insights (at least according to the CIA) with which to establish a new mode of spirituality (read metaphorically as "build a new temple") based on her understanding of neuroscience and nonlocal consciousness. Nonlocal consciousness occupies a central position in the narrative, at times giving the impression that the novel itself functions primarily as a vehicle for exploring the concept and its spiritual and social ramifications. Just before the prologue, Brown presents us with three facts, the second of which states "All experiments, technologies, and scientific results [in the novel] are true to life." This paratextual framing collapses the boundary between fiction and reality while establishing the text's authority upfront, priming the reader to suspend disbelief in the novel's more speculative elements.

Narrating this story from the third-person omniscient perspective puts Brown himself in the role of narrative God, dispensing and withholding insights to heighten suspense, create tension, and lend weight to philosophical arguments as he sees fit. In the prologue, we open with a scene of science confronting spirituality (the novel's underlying theme) through a firsthand experience of dying, establishing the particular thanatological framework the text will explore. Dr. Brigita Gessner, a neuroscientist and associate of Katherine Solomon, is having an out-of-body experience due to the fact that she is currently being murdered by a mysterious golem-like figure: "Disoriented, she strained to make sense of her predicament. *I am a neuroscientist*, she reassured herself. *I am of sound mind"* (p. 5). Dr. Gessner believes scientific methodology and logic are equivalent to mental well-being. She is engaging in an inner dialogue to make sense of death even as the event unfolds: "*I have died*. *This is the afterlife*. Even as the notion materialized, she rejected it as absurd. *The afterlife is a shared delusion … created to make our actual life bearable"* (p. 5). Dr. Gessner represents the skeptical scientific mindset, simplified by Brown into a character that reads more like a caricature.

An out-of-body experience (or OBE) is the experience that one's consciousness has somehow separated from one's body. The experience may be of floating somewhere near one's body as a ghostlike reflection of oneself, or the experience may be of oneself becoming a perceptual field bereft of any form or clear boundary. Brown opts for the latter version in this passage from page 5: "She was without mass and form. And yet the rest of her, the *real* her—her essence, her consciousness—seemed to be quite intact and alert, floating slowly through the air…" OBEs are well-documented phenomena. However, the notion that an OBE involves consciousness literally separating from the physical body is questionable. To truly answer the question of whether consciousness is capable of leaving its shell, you would first have to explain what *consciousness* is, and you would also have to explain what *matter* is, which gets very tricky when you get down to the subatomic level of reality. Current research indicates OBEs are physically traceable neuropsychological events, yet despite numerous anecdotal reports, no account of a person in a

disembodied state accurately describing a shoe on a roof or a coin on top of a cabinet has ever been objectively verified.

We are in Dr. Gessner's mind from page 5 to the top of page 7, sharing her thoughts, experiencing the OBE from her perspective, feeling her confusion, which initiates the mystery and the tension of the story, but at the middle of page 7 we are abruptly removed from her mind (highlighted in bold type):

"Why are you doing this?!" Gessner had screamed in panic. "Who are you?!" *What are you?!*

"I am her protector," the monster replied. His voice was hollow, his accent vaguely Slavic. "She trusted you … and you betrayed her."

"Who?!" Gessner demanded.

The monster spoke a woman's name, and Gessner felt a stab of panic.

Immediately after this narrative distancing Brown shifts back to narrating the scene in close third person, and we are inside her mind: *"How can he possibly know what I have done?!"* (p. 7). But a few lines later we are taken out of her mind once again and told the following events occurred: "Racked with terror, Gessner spoke as quickly as she could through clenched teeth, frantically revealing the secrets she had vowed to keep. She answered his questions, divulging the disturbing truth about what she and her partners had created deep beneath the city of Prague" (p. 7). In addition to portraying the literal detachment of Gessner's consciousness from her body, Brown orchestrates a perspectival out-of-body experience for the reader as we oscillate between inhabiting her panicked interiority and being abruptly expelled into an external perspective where her actions are reported. Mystery authors often sacrifice narrative trust for the sake of heightening suspense, mirroring the genre's main source of tension: positioning the reader at the cusp of revelation without allowing them to be fully secure in their understanding of events.

OBE data presented at the First International Forum of Consciousness Research in 1999: 85% of the 1,185 respondents claimed to have had between two and ten OBEs, 5.5% claimed to have had more than 100 such experiences, 45% claimed to have successfully induced at least one OBE by using a specific OBE-inducing technique, 62% claimed to experience non-physical flight, 40% claimed to see their own body while floating outside of it, and 38% claimed to have passed through solid objects such as walls[1].

Dr. Gessner dies at the end of the prologue, revealing the story's metaphysical stance: "She tried to shout an appeal for mercy, but her voice was muted by a deafening thunderclap as the sky above her seemed to open wide. She felt herself gripped by an unseen force—a kind of reverse gravity—lifting her higher, dragging her upward" (p. 8). Again, we are given just enough information to conclude something intriguing is happening, but not enough to solve the mystery of what happens when we die. The end of Dr. Gessner's story serves as the beginning of Langdon and Solomon's. The understanding that death is not the end but rather the beginning is a motif throughout the text. As happens so often in mystery novels, the beginning contains an ending (usually to a physical life), and the ending contains a beginning (usually to a new understanding of life). The first sentence of Brown's novel involves the ending of someone's story (Dr. Gessner): "*I must have died*, the woman thought" (p. 5). And the final sentence of the novel involves ushering in a new epoch of human understanding, with the delivery of

Katherine's groundbreaking book to her publisher. After Gessner's death, the novel's exploration of consciousness shifts from the experiential to the theoretical, introducing the "hard problem of consciousness" in a lecture given by Katherine Solomon:

"So can we all start by agreeing on the basics? Consciousness is created by your brain—the three-pound bundle of eighty-six billion neurons inside your skull—and therefore *consciousness* is located inside our heads."

Nods all around.

"Wonderful," Katherine said. "We've all just agreed on the currently accepted model of human consciousness." After a beat, she sighed heavily. "The problem is . . . the currently accepted model is *dead wrong*. Your consciousness is *not* created by your brain. And in fact, your consciousness is not even located *inside* your head" (p. 15).

The "hard problem of consciousness" (a phrase coined by philosopher David Chalmers[2] in 1995) is crucial not only to this story's plausibility but to the plausibility of nonlocal consciousness. The story does not merely incorporate nonlocal consciousness as a plot device; a substantial portion of the novel is devoted to establishing the conceptual legitimacy of nonlocal consciousness, developing this argument across 91 of its 671 pages. But in order to properly analyze and weigh Katherine's argument, we must become familiar with other equally viable discourses and counterarguments regarding this subject. The hard problem of consciousness boils down to our inability to explain how neurobiological mechanisms produce our subjective qualitative experiences, such as the experience of redness or the feeling of pain. There seems to be no directly identifiable causal link between physical processes and their phenomenal manifestations. Philosophers and scientists have generally been divided into two camps when it comes to the hard problem of consciousness. The physicalist camp believes consciousness is produced within the brain, and it's simply a matter of time until we figure out the processes of its emergence. The other camp thinks of consciousness as something fundamental to the universe, often likening it to a radio signal, and our brains are the receivers. This understanding of consciousness is generally referred to as nonlocal consciousness. Theories of nonlocal consciousness view consciousness as an extraphysical force located outside the brain, and our brains must filter away most of this universal consciousness in order to achieve our individualized perspectives, like tuning a radio to one frequency or another. Katherine Solomon argues that the inhibitory neurotransmitter GABA plays a crucial role in this filtering process.

A theory is any model that reduces a large set of observations to a more manageable set of coherent principles which can be tested and used to make predictions. Theories are generally expressed through the conceptual frameworks of science and mathematics, striving for a sort of disembodied, nonlocal objectivity, free from subjective human perspective. Physicalist theories of consciousness are generally divided into four groups: higher-order, global workspace, predictive processing, and integrated information. Higher-order theories propose that basic mental states become conscious only when represented by higher-order mental states. For example, a first-order mental state associated with tissue damage becomes consciously felt as pain once it is the object of a higher-order mental representation. Global workspace theory suggests that background thoughts become foreground awareness when broadcast across multiple regions of the brain working together to produce experience, the gist being that

consciousness acts as a spotlight to bring certain information to our awareness while leaving the bulk of our accumulated data in the shadows of the unconscious. Predictive processing theory conjectures your brain is continuously assessing the world to see if it matches your prior model and expectations of reality, noting any differences that come into your field of awareness and adjusting its model and expectations accordingly. Integrated information theory surmises that a system can be considered conscious if it generates more information as a whole than can be generated by the sum of its parts.

Nonlocal theories of consciousness are generally divided into four groups: quantum, hyperdimensional, field consciousness (the radio signal theory), and the universal mind. Quantum theories of consciousness incorporate the quantum mechanical concepts of non-determinism (i.e., subatomic behavior is inherently unpredictable), superposition (i.e., the ability of a particle to exist in multiple positions or states simultaneously), and entanglement (i.e., a phenomenon where two or more particles become correlated in such a way that measuring one instantly affects the state of the others, regardless of the distance between them) in an effort to explain the qualitative experience of consciousness. The leading proponents of quantum consciousness theory are anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff and physicist Roger Penrose. Their "Orchestrated Objective Reduction" theory proposes that consciousness arises from quantum processes (i.e., orchestrated collapses of the quantum wave function) occurring within the microtubules comprising the structure of neurons in the brain[3]. Hyperdimensional theories of consciousness posit there are eleven dimensions, ten involving space and one involving time, but seven of the spatial dimensions are so small (on the Planck scale) that they are undetectable to our four-dimensional senses and instruments, and consciousness arises within these imperceptible dimensions. Field theories of consciousness postulate that the brain does not generate consciousness but instead acts as a receiver for nonlocal fields of consciousness, similar to how a radio tunes into certain frequencies. The fourth view of nonlocal consciousness sees consciousness as fundamental and all-pervasive. Consciousness is everywhere, and everything is imbued with it. The main issue with every nonlocal solution to the hard problem of consciousness is that it merely moves the source of mystery one step further, doing nothing to unveil the root causes and underlying mechanics of consciousness.

Katherine Solomon is an adherent of a combination of "field" and "universal mind" theories of nonlocal consciousness, as revealed in this passage: "'The theory,' Katherine had said, 'is called *nonlocal consciousness*. And it's based on the premise that consciousness is *not* localized to your brain . . . but rather it is *everywhere*. That is to say, consciousness permeates the universe. Consciousness is, in fact, one of the fundamental building blocks of our world'" (p. 262). The prologue's rendering of a disembodied OBE as an objective event indicates that Katherine's specific take on nonlocal consciousness is at least partially correct according to the physics of this novel's world.

The term *out-of-body experience* was coined in 1943 by G.N.M. Tyrell[4]. In 1968, Celia Green conducted the first large-scale study of OBEs, querying 400 subjects[5]. She proposed the term *metachoric experience* to denote a semi-conscious state wherein a person's entire field of perception is replaced with a hallucination that incorporates perceived elements from the real world. In 2001, Dr. Sam Parnia and colleagues investigated OBE claims by placing figures on suspended boards facing the ceiling, not visible from the floor. According to Dr. Parnia,

“Anybody who claimed to have left their body and be near the ceiling during resuscitation attempts would be expected to identify those targets. If, however, such perceptions are psychological, then one would obviously not expect the targets to be identified.” The year-long investigation consisted of 63 cardiac arrest survivors, 7 of whom had memories of the time they were unconscious, and 4 of whom had near-death experiences (according to the investigation’s criteria for such phenomena). The philosopher Keith Augustine later confirmed that all OBE target identification experiments in Dr. Parnia’s investigation produced negative results[6].

In 2008, twenty-five U.K. and U.S. hospitals began participation in a large-scale OBE study coordinated once again by Dr. Sam Parnia, known as the AWARE study. As part of the study, Dr. Parnia placed hidden targets on shelves that could only be seen from above. According to Dr. Parnia, “if no one sees the pictures, it shows these experiences are illusions or false memories.” Dr. Parnia issued a statement in 2014 indicating the first phase of the project was complete. No subjects saw any of the images that were mounted out of sight. Only 9% of the participants had NDEs, and only 2% reported hearing and seeing events in an OBE. In the words of parapsychologist Caroline Watt, “The one ‘verifiable period of conscious awareness’ that Dr. Parnia was able to report did not relate to this objective test. Rather, it was a patient giving a supposedly accurate report of events during his resuscitation. He didn't identify the pictures, he described the defibrillator machine noise. But that's not very impressive since many people know what goes on in an emergency room setting from seeing recreations on television[7].”

Dr. Shahar Arzy and colleagues demonstrated in 2006 that self-location and body recognition involve two posterior brain regions: the temporoparietal junction (TPJ) is involved in spatially situating oneself within one’s environment; and the extrastriate body area (EBA) is involved in spatially situating oneself within one’s body[8]. Mentally embodied self-location mainly involves the extrastriate body area (EBA), whereas disembodied self-location mainly involves the temporoparietal junction (TPJ).

Returning to Katherine’s argument, Robert Langdon recalls her lecture from the night before, which opened with an image of a human brain: “‘I realize it looks more like a mound of very old hamburger, but I can assure you, this organ is nothing short of miraculous. It contains approximately eighty-six *billion* neurons. Together they form over a hundred *trillion* synaptic connections, which can process complex information almost instantly […] We each store millions of gigabytes of data in here—images, memories, lifetimes of education, skill sets, languages . . . all sorted and organized neatly in this tiny space […] Materialist scientists remain baffled as to how an organ so *small* could possibly hold such *vast* quantities of information’” (p. 100). The section establishes Katherine’s authority through the introduction of neuroscientific facts while prepping us for the intellectual journey ahead. By framing the expositional passage within the familiar setting of a lecture hall, Brown transforms what might otherwise seem like intrusive narrative explanation into an immersive scene. The reader receives the information along with Langdon and the audience, thereby reinforcing the sense of participation in the unfolding story. This method of informational dissemination recurs throughout the novel, making complex ideas feel integrated rather than imposed. Furthermore, we associate lecture halls with intellectual authority and professionalism, making the reader more receptive to the information being divulged.

Later in the novel, we revisit Katherine’s lecture in another flashback, this time from the perspective of the golem-like entity listening to her offer proof that physicalist theories of

consciousness are inadequate: "'There exists an extraordinary phenomenon,' Katherine had said, 'that proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that our traditional views of consciousness are entirely wrong. It's called sudden savant syndrome, and the clinical definition is as follows: 'The abrupt manifestation in a human mind of a unique skill or knowledge that previously was nonexistent'" (p. 122). In addition to the murder of Dr. Gessner—and perhaps more important to the reader—the novel's deeper mysteries are *what is consciousness?* and *what happens when we die?* These questions bleed beyond the page into the reader's real life, not just their imagination. The narrative is attempting to smuggle its version of reality into the reader while also transporting the reader into its world.

Any novel seriously concerned with the subject of life after death would be incomplete without acknowledging the work of Dr. Raymond Moody, arguably the most famous spokesperson for the life-after-death argument: "Langdon's only encounter with near-death experiences had been in the pages of Raymond Moody's 1975 bestseller, *Life After Life*, the book credited with persuading scientists to look more seriously at the possibility that death was not the end of a journey . . . but rather just the beginning" (p. 192). Interviews with Dr. Moody always involve reminding the audience that he famously coined the phrase "near-death experience" in 1975, failing to mention that almost a century earlier, in 1896, Victor Egger coined the term "experience of imminent death" to describe life reviews, tunnels of light, time dilation, and other phenomena that climbers said they experienced during falls from great heights[9]. Claiming Dr. Moody originated a widely recognized term is an attempt to bolster his reputation, but the omission of Egger's prior thanatological contribution undermines the very credibility the claim seeks to establish, suggesting Moody's authority relies on a constructed narrative and selective framing. Such manufactured authority is characteristic of most works of fiction. *The Secret of Secrets*, like so many religious, scientific, and philosophical narratives about consciousness, death, and the afterlife, constructs credibility through strategic framing (e.g., omitting counterarguments, the biased orchestration of what counts as knowledge).

Katherine Solomon's argument for the plausibility of nonlocal consciousness incorporates a reasoned appeal to ignorance: "'Yes, and I agree that repeatability is a reasonable burden of proof at the *macroscopic* level. But at the *quantum* level, things work differently. The quantum world is understood to be *unpredictable*. In fact, unpredictability is quite literally its most agreed-upon state […] The language of the quantum world […] is literally the language of *unpredictability*—probability waves, quantum fluctuations, uncertainty principles, probabilistic tunneling, chaos, quantum interference, decoherence, superpositions, dualities. All of this translates loosely to 'We don't know what's going to happen because the classical rules of physics don't apply!'" (p. 338). Her argument is that repeatability is an unreasonable burden of proof when dealing with the subject of consciousness and paranormal phenomena, implying scientific methodology actually obstructs scientific progress in some cases. Dr. Raymond Moody echoes this sentiment in his most recent interview at the time of this writing[10], stating, "The logic of unintelligibility may very well give us rational proof of an afterlife."

Reasoned appeals to ignorance use the absence of definitive knowledge to reframe uncertainty as evidence of possibility. Katherine's argument concerning repeatability transitions into the radio analogy of nonlocal consciousness, never specifying what kind of information the brain-radio is receiving, or how the brain-radio receives it, or where the transmission originates: "'In the nonlocal consciousness model, your brain is a kind of radio that *receives* consciousness,

and like all radios it has countless stations bombarding it all the time […] The radio itself has the capacity to receive all stations, but without a way to filter the frequencies that flow in, it would play all those frequencies at once. The human brain works the same way; it has a complex series of filters to prevent the mind from being *overloaded* with too much sensory stimulus…'" (p. 340). The process of radio communication involves more than just the signal. The receiver of the signal, the actual radio, is a specific model with specific parts that vary in durability and performance from brand to brand. The signal, in this case consciousness, is useless without a properly functioning radio, in this case a functional brain. Consciousness may very well continue in some manner beyond the body, but there is no indication it would be anything like the version you are experiencing right now through your nervous system. In other words, even if consciousness exists outside the brain, perceptions can only be meaningfully and coherently perceived through the senses; otherwise, what use is there for perceptual interface technology such as eyes, ears, noses, and tongues? In this scenario, disembodied consciousness would be nothing more than static, countering the notion that "you" (your experience of reality and self-aware identity) would somehow still exist. This is the standard argument against the radio analogy of disembodied consciousness, which is conspicuously absent from the novel's discourse.

In the passage quoted above, rather than relying on the lecture hall setting to confer intellectual credibility, the text uses Langdon himself, whom we have come to regard as the story's embodiment of skeptical yet open-minded inquiry, to reinforce Katherine's argument for the nonlocal interpretation of consciousness, validating her points through authorially contrived affirmations such as "That makes perfect sense…" (p. 340) and "Makes perfect sense so far…" (p. 342). The fact that Langdon, whose intellectual authority has been established throughout five prior novels, finds the argument increasingly plausible facilitates our being able to find it plausible as well. Underlying Brown's novel is the notion that knowledge emerges through persuasion, dialogue, and shared practices within communities, as opposed to the unveiling of eternal, immutable truths. Ideas occur in specific social contexts and are thus bound up with specific social evaluations, as is language itself. Language is in a ceaseless flow of becoming. As philosopher and literary critic M. M. Bakhtin writes, "Language acquires life and historically evolves in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language, nor in the individual psyche of speakers.[11]"

Philosopher and literary critic Julia Kristeva, who coined the term "intertextuality" in 1966, spoke of intertextuality in terms of a text's horizontal axis (which represents the relationship of speaker to audience) and its vertical axis (which represents the relationship of text to context), highlighting an important fact: each text is an intersection of texts where at least one other text can be read. The utilization of one text by another transforms both texts, giving them additional interpretive dimensions. The encroachment of science into the realms of spirituality creates hybrid interpretations of mystical phenomena, arising in new language systems with specialized vocabularies that enable and encourage alternate ways to read age-old experiences, such as we find in the musings of Langdon on page 597: "*Perhaps an exorcist is not trying to coax a demon out of a body . . . but rather trying to retune the body's receiver to block the unwanted station.*" In post-structural semiotics, the word *exorcist* does not have a direct link to the objective world; it's a sign, and signs do not possess inherent meanings. Signs possess meaning only in relation to other signs, with the play of signifiers never arriving at a stable signified. Through the

dialogue Langdon is having with himself, the word *exorcist* is being repurposed. But notice how the ancient notion of an exorcist and the updated version Langdon is currently entertaining both require a degree of faith. The older usage of the word invites one to wonder how the spirits came to be, and the updated usage invites one to wonder how the signals came to be.

The radio signal analogy of consciousness was popularized by Upton Sinclair with his book *Mental Radio* (Sinclair, 1930). The book describes Sinclair's endeavor to demonstrate and provide scientific evidence that his second wife Mary had telepathic abilities. Sinclair had Mary attempt to duplicate 290 pictures which were drawn by her brother, who served as the "sender" in these telepathy experiments. Mary, the "receiver," relying on psychic impressions rather than sight, would sit in a different room than her brother and try to copy the images he drew. The experiment treats thoughts as if they are signals that can be transmitted from one person to another via a shared mental field or frequency. Sinclair claims Mary successfully duplicated 65 of her brother's drawings, with 155 "partial successes" and 70 failures. Critics dismissed Sinclair's findings because his experiment was not conducted in a controlled scientific environment. Mary's telepathic ability was later tested by psychologist William McDougall in a controlled setting, and the results were unimpressive[12]. Sinclair's understanding of psychic communication relies on consciousness being collective, networked, and nonlocal, conceptually paralleling later post-structuralist views of authorship. Literary theorist Roland Barthes, in his influential essay "The Death of the Author," rejects the notion of authorial ownership of a work's genesis and interpretation, declaring, "We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single theological meaning, or the message of the Author-God, but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture… the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter ones with others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them." Elsewhere he describes text as "woven entirely of citations, references, echoes, cultural languages antecedent and contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony.[13]"

It's worth noting that Albert Einstein wrote the preface to *Mental Radio*, included here in its entirety: "I have read the book of Upton Sinclair with great interest and am convinced that the same deserves the most earnest consideration, not only of the laity, but also of the psychologists by profession. The results of the telepathic experiments carefully and plainly set forth in this book stand surely far beyond those which a nature investigator holds to be thinkable. On the other hand, it is out of the question in the case of so conscientious an observer and writer as Upton Sinclair that he is carrying on a conscious deception of the reading world; his good faith and dependability are not to be doubted. So if somehow the facts here set forth rest not upon telepathy, but upon some unconscious hypnotic influence from person to person, this also would be of high psychological interest. In no case should the psychologically interested circles pass over this book heedlessly.[14]" Although Einstein does not endorse Sinclair's conclusions, he argues for a willingness to entertain possibilities that are currently beyond our ability to measure and test, prioritizing open-mindedness over rigid adherence to existing scientific doctrine. Broadening the imaginative horizon in turn leads to a broadening of what is considered scientifically and technologically plausible, which in turn brings about further broadening of the imaginative horizon, creating a continuous cycle of possibility. Sinclair would

not have had the imaginative resources underpinning his concept of consciousness without the work of Guglielmo Marconi, who is generally credited with the invention of the radio, transmitting the first transatlantic radio signal in 1901 through a wireless telegraph system. Sinclair published his book in 1930. Radio became popular in the 1920s, expanding public imagination to integrate the objective reality of nonlocal communication via disembodied voices. Marconi's invention emerged from over three millennia of accumulated inquiry, expanding upon the work of Nikola Tesla, who advanced the work of Heinrich Hertz, who demonstrably proved the work of James Clerk Maxwell, who systematized the work of Michael Faraday, who questioned the work of Sir Isaac Newton, and so on back to the earliest Greek, Indian, and Mesopotamian mathematical innovators, with each new discovery reshaping the imaginative landscape of their successors, thereby reshaping the physical landscapes of the world.

The first person on record in Western literature to speak of nonlocal consciousness is the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras (c. 500-428 BCE), who describes a universal principle of order he calls *Nous*, which translates to *Mind* or *Reason*. The earliest mention of nonlocal consciousness in Eastern literature is found in the *Upanishads* (c. 800-300 BCE), a collection of philosophical texts which suggest the essential oneness of Brahman (the ultimate, unchanging reality and universal spirit) and Atman (the individual soul, considered a spark of Brahman). The term "nonlocal mind" (and by extension "nonlocal consciousness") was coined by physician and author Larry Dossey in 1989, appearing in his book *Recovering the Soul* (Random House, 1989). According to the back cover of the book: "Dr. Dossey synthesizes the ideas of eminent scientists such as Schrödinger, Einstein, Gödel, and Margenau, with the time-honored knowledge of visionaries and mystics to present convincing evidence for a nonlocal, holistic view of mind and reality that can explain transcendental experiences. In short, he provides new proof of the existence of the soul.[15]" Despite the skeptical reception of his work by the general scientific community, his ideas are considered foundational by those who seek to further the boundaries of conventional science, i.e., researchers of transpersonal psychology and the noetic sciences.

A brief discussion of the CIA's involvement in psychic research culminates in *The Secret of Secrets*' most blatant appeal to authority: "The father of American psychology, William James, had famously said: *In order to disprove the assertion that all crows are black, one white crow is sufficient*. As Katherine described in her manuscript, an entire *flock* of white crows had now been flushed out . . . by noetic science, by quantum physics, and by the work of an impressive cadre of academics who were vocal advocates of nonlocal consciousness. Respected minds like Harold Puthoff, Russel Targ, Edwin May, Dean Radin, Brenda Dunne, Robert Morris, Julia Mossbridge, Robert Jahn, and many others all had made astounding findings in diverse fields like plasma physics, nonlinear mathematics, and consciousness anthropology, all of which supported the notion of nonlocal consciousness" (pp. 408-409). It should be noted that many scientists have publicly criticized the findings of Harold Puthoff[16], Russel Targ[16], Edwin May[17], Dean Radin[18], and all the others on Katherine's list, citing a lack of scientific rigor, methodological flaws, and mishandled statistics, characterizing their research as pseudoscience. At the same time, it should also be noted that many innovators throughout history initially met resistance from their peers.

A key part of Katherine Solomon's nonlocal consciousness research is revealed on page 346: "'First, I located a terminally ill patient not too far from the lab—a retired neurologist himself—

who agreed to undergo his death process while enclosed inside a new kind of imaging machine—a real-time magnetic resonance spectroscopy device. I explained that I would be able to watch his brain chemistry moment by moment as he died. He felt gratified by the chance to provide accurate data like we've never been able to measure previously.'" Except we have been able to measure such an experience. This passage stems from research conducted separately by two neuroscientists, Dr. Jimo Borjigin and Dr. Ajmal Zemmar. A study led by Dr. Jimo Borjigin in 2013 found that parts of the brain designated as the "hot zone" for consciousness become extremely active with high-frequency electrical signals called gamma waves moments after taking dying patients off their ventilator. In one patient the signals remained detectable for more than six minutes. "As she died, [the patient's] brain was functioning in a kind of hyperdrive," reported Borjigin. "For about two minutes after her oxygen was cut off, there was an intense synchronization of her brain waves, a state associated with many cognitive functions, including heightened attention and memory. The synchronization dampened for about eighteen seconds, then intensified again for more than four minutes. It faded for a minute, then came back for a third time[19]." According to Borjigin, "Different parts of [the dying patient's] brain were suddenly in close communication with each other. The most intense connections started immediately after her oxygen stopped, and lasted for nearly four minutes. There was another burst of connectivity more than five minutes and twenty seconds after she was taken off life support. In particular, areas of her brain associated with processing conscious experience—areas that are active when we move through the waking world, and when we have vivid dreams—were communicating with those involved in memory formation. So were parts of the brain associated with empathy. Even as she slipped irrevocably deeper into death, something that looked astonishingly like life was taking place over several minutes in [the dying patient's] brain[20]." In 2022, Dr. Ajmal Zemmar inadvertently recorded the brain activity of a patient who died during a brain scan. In Dr. Zemmar's own words, "We measured 900 seconds of brain activity around the time of death and set a specific focus to investigate what happened in the thirty seconds before and after the heart stopped beating. Just before and after the heart stopped working, we saw [an increase] in a specific band of neural oscillations, so-called gamma oscillations, but also in others such as delta, theta, alpha and beta oscillations[21]." Neural oscillations, also called brain waves, are associated with cognition, specifically such functions as thinking, remembering, and dreaming.

Consistent with the novel's tendency of connecting local narrative details to its broader, nonlocal thematic argument, the reason for Katherine's obsession with proving the nonlocality of consciousness is revealed as she and Langdon are waiting for a computer terminal to power up in order to access data from an advanced virtual reality device: "The experience had changed her life, cementing her passion for consciousness as a field of study. The experiment began with her Princeton professor asking Katherine to stand all alone in an empty room. Over the intercom, he instructed her to don her VR goggles. When she did, she was instantly transported to a vast meadow where she stood among flowers and trees […] Standing only two feet away from her was an exact double of … *herself* […] Next, the professor's voice on the intercom instructed Katherine to reach up and place a hand on the shoulder of her ghost double […] Fully expecting to touch nothing but air, she was shocked when her hand came to rest on an *actual* physical shoulder. More shocking still, in that exact instant, Katherine felt the weight of her hand on her *own* shoulder!" (pp. 468-469). A study conducted by Olaf Blanke and colleagues in 2007

demonstrated that conflicting visual and tactile stimuli can disrupt the sense of spatial unity between the self and the body. Using virtual reality headsets to view their own body from behind, participants would begin to experience the virtual body they saw in front of them as if it were their own[22].

Despite the neuroscientific factuality of OBEs, we are told Katherine's OBE experiment involved trickery: "After she had donned her VR goggles and stood in position, a lab tech had slipped silently into the room and stood directly in front of Katherine. When she reached up to place her hand on her 'ghost self,' Katherine unwittingly placed her hand on the shoulder of the lab tech, who simultaneously placed *her* hand on Katherine's shoulder" (p. 470). Although Katherine becomes aware of the experiment's duplicity, the jarring experience is enough to liberate her imagination from former ways of categorizing and delimiting consciousness. Perhaps Dan Brown is aiming for a similar experience through reading this novel, attempting to destabilize the skeptical materialist's signifier-signified relationship between biological death (signifier) and the cessation of identity (signified), at the same time undermining, possibly even usurping, dominant religious ideologies that tend to suppress unorthodox imagination. The passage on page 645 provides a clear motive for such an agenda:

"And it's your theory that this troubling pattern stems from humans' fear of death?"

"It's not *my* theory," Katherine said. "It's scientifically proven in mountains of statistical evidence gathered through observational analysis, behavioral experiments, and scientific polling. The most important point in the research, however, shows that those who do *not* fear death, for whatever reason, tend to exhibit behavior that is more benevolent, accepting of others, cooperative, and caring about the environment…"

The Secret of Secrets is a strategically hybridized text, blending formal mechanics of suspense with rhetorical modes of scientific and philosophical discourse, positioning the reader's suspension of disbelief in a liminal space where empirical authority and imaginative speculation mutually reinforce each other. Several mysteries common to the genre overtly drive the plot: the murders of Dr. Brigita Gessner and Michael Harris, the nature of the golem-like entity, Sasha Vesna's role, and the motives of the shadowy agents attempting to prevent Katherine Solomon from publishing her book. Interwoven throughout these puzzles, the novel also explores deeper, more covert mysteries the reader must negotiate beyond the final page: what happens when we die, what is consciousness, what are the social repercussions of science and technology colonizing religious domains, how are neuroscience and quantum physics transforming spiritual discourse, and what constitutes proof in the 21st century?

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The eidetic afterlife is an amplified state of consciousness that occurs just before biological death. The eidetic afterlife is not an illusion. Nor is it a mere dream or hallucination. It's an augmented (hyper-synaptic) mode of accessing and processing information, which drastically alters our experience of time and reality. The hypothesis suggests that **an infinitesimal objective moment could contain an immense or unbounded subjective experience, i.e., the experience of eternity.**